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Issue No. 11

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MANGAJIN

Editor & Publisher
Vaughan P. Simmons

Advising & Contributing Editors
Van Gessel
Peter Goodman
Wayne Lammers
Karen Sandness
Frederik L. Schodt
Jack Seward

Contributing Writers
Zane Ferry
Alan Gleason
T.K. Ito
Virginia Murray
Tony Mizukami
Ginny Skord

Art & Graphics
Ashizawa Kazuko
Anthony Owsley

Business Manager
Graham Evan Bennett
Tel. 404-634-2276
Fax 404-634-1799

Subscription Manager
Mary Ann Beech
404-634-3874

Cover: Kazuko

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Editor's Note

We had a letter from a reader asking for more information about how MANGAJIN was produced. (The actual letter is on page 6, in the Letters column, of course.) This is a subject we had been intending to cover for some time, so here goes.

First, the text in boxes that goes with the manga material (except for the Basic Japanese column) is now produced using WordPerfect on an IBM compatible PC (a 286, although an XT works just fine). This set-up has its advantages and disadvantages. On the plus side, WordPerfect is one of the few word processing or desktop publishing softwares I know of that, without any modification, will make the macrons (long marks) over vowels (like ā, ī, ū, ē, ō) necessary for writing Japanese in English letters. The PostScript™ fonts supplied with Macintosh computers must be modified (or special fonts purchased), but more about that later.

Another advantage of WordPerfect for producing text in boxes is that the boxes will automatically shrink or expand when the text is edited. WordPerfect is also one of the most widely-used softwares, so it makes it easier to work with free-lancers, especially free-lance translators who are using second-hand XT computers that they bought at a local flea market.

Of course, the big disadvantage of WordPerfect is that, while it will produce katakana and hiragana, it can't handle kanji. To produce our Japanese text, we now use PageMaker 3.0J on a Macintosh SE (with accelerator board and expanded memory). For pages that have little or no Japanese text, we use PageMaker 4.0 (English), because it has better control over letter spacing, and some other handy features. We sometimes use MicroSoft Word for entering and editing text on the Macintosh, but much of our material is composed in PageMaker because the format and content are so closely

(continued page 53)

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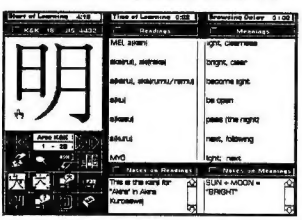

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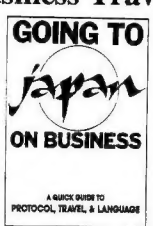

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WARNING!

SOME PEOPLE SAY *THERE ARE FEW TRUE "CUSSWORDS" IN JAPANESE BECAUSE IT'S POSSIBLE TO BE JUST AS OFFENSIVE BY USING A LOWER POLITENESS LEVEL.*

The politeness levels found in Japanese frequently have no counterpart in English. This can cause problems for translators. The words *suru* and *shimasu* would both be rendered simply as "do" in English, but in Japanese there is a very clear distinction between the "politeness" levels of these two words. In a more extreme case, *shiyagaru* would also be translated simply as "do" in English, but in Japanese this word is openly offensive.

Learning Japanese from *manga* is a good way to get a "feel" for these politeness levels. You see words used in the context of a social setting.

The danger in "picking up" Japanese is that even though most Japanese people appreciate the fact that you are interested in learning their language and will give you "slack" as a beginner, misused politeness levels can be pretty grating on the Japanese ear, even if they do not reach the point of being truly offensive.

How can I be safe? Politeness Level 3 can be used in almost any situation. Although it might not be completely natural in a very formal situation, it will not cause offense. If you want to be safe, use PL2 only with friends and avoid PL1 altogether.

"Politeness Level" Codes used in MANGAJIN

(PL4) Politeness Level 4 : Very Polite
Typically uses special honorific or humble words, such as *nasaimasu* or *itashimasu*.

(PL3) Politeness Level 3 : Ordinary Polite
Typified by the verb *desu*, or the *-masu* ending on other verbs.

(PL2) Politeness Level 2 : Plain / Abrupt
For informal conversation with peers.
- "dictionary form" of verbs
- adjectives without *desu*

(PL1) Politeness Level 1 : Rude / Condescending
Typified by special words or verb endings, usually not "obscene" in the Western sense of the word, but equally insulting.

These levels are only approximations : To simplify matters, we use the word "politeness," although there are actually several dimensions involved (formality, deference, humility, refinement, etc.). While the level of respect (or lack of it) for the person spoken to or spoken about can determine which words are used, verb forms are determined largely by the formality of the situation. Thus, it is difficult to label the verb *irassharu* (informal form of an honorific verb) using this simple four-level system. In such cases we sometimes use combined tags, such as (PL4-3).

Rather than trying to develop an elaborate system which might be so confusing as to actually defeat the purpose, we feel that this system, even with its compromises, is the best way to save our readers from embarrassing situations.

Pronunciation Guide

THIS IS ONLY A GUIDE! *DON'T TRY TO LEARN JAPANESE PRONUNCIATION ON YOUR OWN. GET HELP FROM A QUALIFIED INSTRUCTOR.*

Pronunciation is probably one of the easier aspects of Japanese. Vowel sounds don't vary as they do in English. While English uses the five letters a,e,i,o,u to make 20 or so vowel sounds, in Japanese there are 5 vowels and 5 vowel sounds — the pronunciation is always constant. There are only a few sounds in the entire phonetic system which will be completely new to the speaker of English.

The five vowels in Japanese are written *a,i,u,e,o* in *rōmaji* (English letters). This is also the order in which they appear in the Japanese kana "alphabet." They are pronounced:

a like the *a* in f*a*ther, or h*a* h*a*!
i like the *i* in macaron*i*
u like the *u* in z*u*l*u*
e like the *e* in g*e*t, or *e*xtra
o like the *o* in s*o*l*o*

The length of time that a vowel sound is held or sustained makes it "long" or "short" in Japanese. Don't confuse this with what are called long or short vowels in English. The long vowel in Japanese has exactly the same pronunciation as the short vowel, but it's held for twice as long. Long vowels are designated by a dash over the vowel (*dōmo, okāsan*), or by repeating the vowel *(iimasu)*.

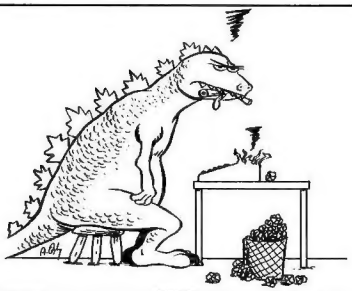
The vowels *i* and *u* are sometimes not fully sounded (as in the verb *desu* or the verb ending *-mashita*). This varies between individual speakers and there are no fixed rules.

Japanese consonant sounds are pretty close to those of English. The notable exception is the r sound, which is like a combination of the English r and l, winding up close to the d sound. If you say the name Eddy and touch the tip of your tongue lightly behind the upper front teeth, you have an approximation of the Japanese word *eri* (collar).

Doubled consonants are pronounced by pausing just slightly after the sound is formed, and then almost "spitting out" the rest of the word. Although this phenomenon does not really occur in English, it is somewhat similar to the k sound in the word bookkeeper.

The *n* sound: When it is not attached to a vowel (as in *na,ni,nu,ne,no*), *n* is like a syllable in itself, and as such it receives a full "beat." When *n* is followed by a vowel to which it is not attached, we mark it with an apostrophe. Note the difference between the word for "no smoking" *kin'en* (actually four syllables: *ki-n-e-n*), and the word for "anniversary" *kinen* (three syllables: *ki-ne-n*).

The distinctive sound of spoken Japanese is partly due to the even stress or accent given to each syllable. This is one reason why pronunciation of Japanese is relatively easy. Although changes of pitch do occur in Japanese, in most cases these are not essential to the meaning. Beginners, especially Americans, are probably better off to try for flat, even intonation. Rising pitch for questions and stressing words for emphasis are much the same as in English.



APOLOGY!
From the translators

Since most of the people who read MANGAJIN are interested in the Japanese language, we strive to reflect the nature of the original Japanese in our translations, sometimes at the expense of smooth, natural sounding English. We ask that you please give us your honorable acceptance of this fact.

– Trans.

Letters to the Editor

MANGAJIN welcomes readers' comments by letter or fax, although we reserve the right to edit for clarity or length. Please address correspondence to: Editor, MANGAJIN, P.O. Box 49543, Atlanta, GA 30359. Fax: (404) 634-1799.

A French Book on Manga

I thought you might be interested to know the Belgian publisher Casterman has published a book entitled *L'univers des Mangas*, by Thierry Groensteen. It cost 120FF (about $20) in France.

The book covers roughly the same ground as *Manga! Manga!* (Frederik Schodt, Kodansha International), but there is very little duplication of effort. Just like Schodt's book, Groensteen's is well-illustrated, but few, if any, illustrations are the same. In *L'univers des Mangas* you will find a chapter about animation and comic book adaptions of animated films. There is also a long chapter about Tezuka Osamu and another chapter with brief introductions to 25 different artists.

I can imagine most of your readers are having more than enough fun with Japanese alone. Still, I thought it would be interesting to know about, and there just might be the odd French or French Canadian expat among your readers.

PEDER CHRISTENSEN
Lund, Sweden

Where to find *Dai-Tōkyō*?

Out of all the manga that have appeared in your magazine, *Dai-Tōkyō Binbō Sekatsu Manyuaru* is my favorite, so I made it a high priority to look for it during my recent trip to Japan. This, however, proved easier said than done.

Dai-Tōkyō was not to be found at any of the large bookstores I visited in both the Tokyo and Kansai areas, and most of the time the sales clerks had never even heard of the manga. In fact, out of all the manga readers I talked to during my trip, only one person had actually read *Dai-Tōkyō*. I eventually stumbled across it in a small branch of a department store, but I believe that was due more to luck than wide selection.

In view of this lack of availability, I wonder if it would be possible to enter into some sort of agreement with *Dai-Tōkyō*'s publisher to sell the manga directly through MANGAJIN. This would make *Dai-Tōkyō* easily available for all of its American fans.

IAN BALDWIN
Bethesda, MD

Even before we received this letter, we had contacted Kodansha out the possibility of offering Dai-Tōkyō Binbō Seikatsu Manyuaru through MANGAJIN. We have 50 five-volume sets on the way, and we'll be offering them in the next issue. In fact, if we don't lose too much money on this deal, we may offer What's Michael and some of the other titles.

How do you do that?

I am a translator of books and catalogs on Japanese art and architecture by choice; to make a living, I am also a professor of comparative cultures at Kyushu Women's University. Your publication is superb, and I have been receiving it on subscription from Tokyo since the first issue.

MANGAJIN No. 9 carried a letter to the editor from Prof. Glazer concerning formation of a MacUser group for Japanese language software. I shall write to Prof. Glazer, but it occurred to me that you could make a valuable contribution by using one of the upcoming Editor's Note columns to tell readers what hardware and software you're using to produce MANGAJIN. I am still in search of an integrative English-Japanese word processing program for the Macintosh; surely there must be a better way of doing things than inputting Japanese text on a Japanese laptop (Toshiba Dynabook is what I'm using), bringing my disk into Fukuoka for a laser printout, and then cutting and pasting onto a high-resolution printout of the English text, in which generous space has been left for the kanji. Vol. 1 No. 3 contained the best guide to software to handle Japanese text that I've ever seen. Could you go the extra mile and tell me how a typical issue of MANGAJIN is developed typographically?

PAUL ZITO
Kurume-shi, Fukuoka

Actually, we're not above doing cut-and-paste, but for more complete information on how MANGAJIN is produced, see the Editor's Note, page 2.

Bloopers

We'll send you a MANGAJIN T-shirt if we publish your story of a language (Japanese or English) blooper.

At a recent Japan Society film showing, my wife and I began speaking to a woman newly arrived from Kyoto and the talk turned to grandchildren. When we showed pictures of ours and asked if she had *mago*, we were surprised by the announcement that her daughter-in-law was "inconceivable." Our expressions having alerted her to the fact that she had made some kind of error, she bravely tried once more. "You see, she's really impregnable," the lady explained. Seeing we could barely contain our laughter, she made a final effort. "The fact of the matter is she's completely unbearable." When we explained her error in usage, her own laughter finally left us free to release ours.

STANLEY HOCHMAN
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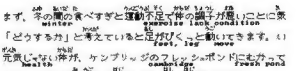
One of the most frustrating experiences encountered by Japanese and Chinese language students occurs when confronted by a Chinese character that was once learned but now forgotten. While native speakers spend years memorizing *kanji*, most of us can afford to spend only a few hours per week on language study. Furthermore, we would rather spend time reading Mangajin than memorizing kanji. The result is that the beautiful and mysterious characters that attracted us to Asian languages in the first place remain an obstacle to understanding, even after years of study. Asian word processors designed for native speakers actually worsen the situation by making writing easier in a way that impedes the learning process, leading to the irony of not being able to read even that which you have written yourself.



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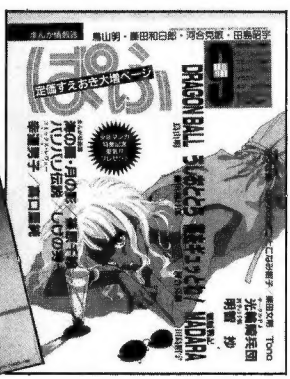
Magazines of Manga Criticism

by
Frederik L. Schodt

Even if one were to read from dawn to dusk every day, it would still be impossible to follow everything going on in the manga industry—there are simply too many different artists and too many different genre. Fortunately, there has been a rapid increase in the number of professional manga critics, and in books and magazines of criticism. This sub-industry helps promote higher quality manga, and provides a road map to a vast, confusing universe.

Two of the best known magazines of criticism, *Comic Box* and *Pafu*, appear monthly. Around 200 pages in length, they retail for ¥770 and ¥840, respectively, and contain illustrated reviews of manga and animation, articles about the industry, fanatically detailed lists of the hundreds of manga magazines and books published each month and, often, illustrations or short works submitted by readers. Best yet, they both issue an annual roundup of the industry, with a survey of their readers. Here are some of the highlights of 1990.



First of all, 1990 was the year of Sakura Momoko's endearing *Chibi Maruko-chan* ("Little Maruko"), a work so popular in Japan that one would have to be braindead not to have noticed. But *Comic Box* and *Pafu* readers are usually a few steps ahead of the masses. When surveyed, the favorite story of *Comic Box* readers was not *Chibi Maruko-chan* but Toriyama Akira's *Dragon Ball*, a zany comedy version of the famous Chinese classic, "Monkey King," serialized in the boy's weekly, *Shōnen Jump*; the favorite of *Pafu* readers was Ozaki Minami's hard-boiled romance, *Zetsu-ai 1989* ("Hopeless Love 1989") which ran in the girl's comic weekly, *Margaret*. Reflecting the strength of women manga artists today, veterans Takahashi Rumiko and Yoshida Akimi ranked near the top of the popularity lists in both the *Comic Box* and *Pafu* surveys.

Both magazines noted several events of 1990 that reflect the continued growth of the manga industry, and the ever-expanding influence of manga in Japanese society. In what has practically become an annual ritual, the weekly manga magazine, *Shōnen Jump* broke yet another sales record, selling a mind-boggling 6 million-plus copies of its year-end edition. Takahashi Rumiko, the artist of *Ranma 1/2* made the list of top tax payers that the National Tax Administration Agency releases every year. She paid ¥127,270,000 or just under 1 million dollars (her gross income was probably double that amount). In what amounted to an unprecedented official recognition of manga in Japan, a retrospective exhibition of Tezuka Osamu's work was held in the Tokyo National Museum of Modern Art. And in the Diet, legislators debated Kawaguchi Kaiji's *Chinmoku no Kantai* ("The Silent Service"), a long-running tale of an independent-minded Japanese submariner who upsets the balance of power in the world. The same story was advertised in the *Japan Economic Journal* as "The Comic that woke Heisei era Japan" and stirred debate on national security.

As with every year, new faces joined the industry, and some old ones dropped out. Takita Yu, who drew nostalgic stories of life in post-war Tokyo, passed away. Veteran gag artist, Yamagami Tatsuhiko (author of the now-classic *Gaki Deka* or "Kid Cop"), retired to become a novelist. Ideda Riyoko (nationally famous for "The Rose of Versailles") had announced that she would retire after finishing one long series about 18th century Poland, but she decided to go on and create one more, this time about the life of Japan's seventh century political genius, Shōtoku Taishi.

Nineteen ninety was also the year that a backlash appeared against manga in Japan. Inevitably (given the direction some manga for "children" were developing), several local prefectural and municipal organizations began designating certain sex-oriented manga as harmful to young people, and police even began cracking down on editors and booksellers. Nineteen ninety was also the year that racism became an issue in manga, with some organizations trying to draw attention to, and eliminate, offensive depictions of racial minorities. In addition to current works, several classics created in the early '50s were targeted.

(continued page 61)

失礼

Lesson 11 • *Shitsurei*

Shitsurei is written with two kanji meaning "lose" (失 *shitsu*) and "politeness/manners" (礼 *rei*). The word *shitsurei* is a noun meaning "rudeness" or "bad manners," but students usually encounter it first in the expression *shitsurei shimashita*, literally "I have committed a rudeness," → "I'm sorry/Excuse me." The non-past form, *shitsurei shimasu*, literally "I (will) commit a rudeness," is typically used to apologize in advance for anything that might be considered a disturbance, interruption, or impropriety. Like "Excuse me," *shitsurei shimasu* is also used in ways that are fairly idiomatic—for example, as a kind of "good-bye." To illustrate these and other uses, we'll let the manga do the talking.

Shitsurei as an apology

This man is late for a luncheon of business leaders. He apologizes as he enters the room. In this case, he could have used *sumimasen* instead of *shiturei shimashita* → *Osoku natte sumimasen*.

© Yamasaki & Kitami / *Tsuri-Baka Nisshi*

Osoku natte shitsurei shimashita.
"Excuse me for being late." (PL3)

- *osoku* is the adverb form of *osoi* ("late").
- *natte* is from the verb *naru* ("become"). The -te form functions here as a continuing ("and . . .") form to express a cause–effect situation ("I am late and [as a result] I have committed a rudeness.")

This sararii-man apologizes after being reprimanded by one of his female co-workers. His response can be considered an abbreviated form of *shitsurei shimashita*.

© Gyū & Kondō / *Eigyō Tenteko Nisshi*

OL: *Toire detara te o aratte kudasai!!*
"When you come out of the toilet, please wash your hands!!" (PL3)
Salary-man: *A . . . shitsurei . . .*
"Oh . . . sorry . . ."

- *toire* is a katakana version of "toilet." Strictly speaking, the particle *o* should follow *toire*.
- *detara* is a conditional form of the verb *deru* ("leave/go out/come out")
- *te* = "hands"
- *aratte* is from the verb *arau* ("wash")

Three cases for *shitsurei*

Making a cold call on a taxi company, this young car salesman introduces himself, and then immediately sits down and pulls out a brochure about his company's line of automobiles. Jumping right into the sales pitch without establishing rapport with the prospect, and sitting down without being asked would be considered impolite in almost any culture. He makes a cursory apology as he makes himself at home and whips out the sales material.

© Torii Kazuyoshi / *Top wa Ore Da!!*

Salesman: *Chotto shitsurei shimasu.*
"Excuse me (just a little)." (PL3)
Sound FX: *Dosun*
(sound/effect of plopping down into a chair)

- *chotto* = "a little"

He is scolded by the prospect for not doing his "homework" on their business and not being better prepared—prepared to give a big discount, that is. The prospect holds out the carrot of a big sale, but insists on talking with someone higher up who is ready to deal. Here, the salesman is running out the door, apparently to get his boss to come back with him and close the sale. Although *Shitsurei shimashita* can be used in an idiomatic way when departing, in this case it has the nature of a real apology.

Salesman: *Shitsurei shimashita*
"Excuse me!!" (PL3)

© Torii Kazuyoshi / *Top wa Ore Da!!*

Even if your manners were impeccable, it's considered good form to apologize for your behavior during your previous encounter. In this case, the young salesman really has something to apologize for. The prospect is surprised, and slightly impressed, that the salesman had the gumption to come back.

© Torii Kazuyoshi / *Top wa Ore Da!!*

Prospect: *Hō, yoku kita nā.*
"Heh, I'm surprised to see you." (PL2)
Salesman: *Sakujitsu wa dōmo shitsurei shimashita.*
"My sincere apologies for yesterday (I was very impolite yesterday)." (PL3)

- *yoku* is the adverb form of *yoi* ("good"), and *kita* is the plain/abrupt past form of *kuru* ("come"). Followed by a verb, *yoku* can give the feeling that the speaker is impressed/surprised
- *sakujitsu* is a more formal equivalent of *kinō* ("yesterday").

© Yamamoto Mitsuhiko / *Dosa-resurā Densetsu 6*

Shitsurei when entering

It's good manners to say *shitsurei shimasu* when entering someone else's room or office, especially if the person is of higher status than you. The feeling is that you are apologizing for intruding on their space. Here the maid brings tea to a guest at an inn.

Maid: *Shitsurei shimasu . . .*
"Excuse me . . ." (PL3)
Sound FX: *Sā!*
(sound/effect of door sliding open)

In the scene below, a camera crew has arrived to photograph this couple's dancing cat (named Michael). Even though they are being welcomed in, the young lady gives a polite *shitsurei shimasu* before she actually enters their home.

© Kobayashi Makoto / *What's Michael*

Husband: *Dōmo omachi-shite orimashita.*
"We've been waiting (for you)." (PL4)
Wife: *Sā, dōzo, dōzo.*
"Well, please, please (come in)." (PL3)
Lady (reporter): *Sore ja, shitsurei shima—su.*
"Then, excuse me." (PL3)

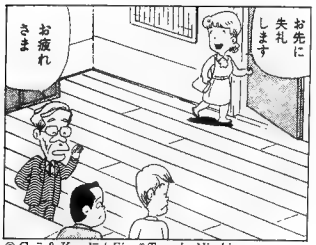
Rough but friendly: this man's friend is depressed and sulking alone in his car. He's getting into the car to cheer up his friend, and he uses the word *shitsurei* as a token apology for his "intrusion," but the informal *suru* (PL2), and the rough emphatic ending *zo* show that this use of *shitsurei* is rather idiomatic.

© Yajima & Hirokane / *Ningen Kōsaten*

Friend: *Shitsurei suru zo.*
"Hey, I'm gettin' in!" (PL2-1)
Sound FX: *Gacha!*
(sound of car door opening)

Shitsurei when leaving

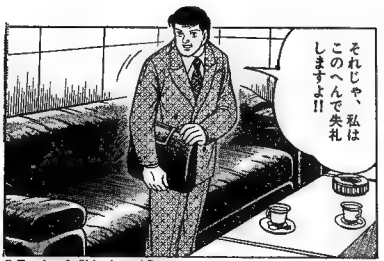
It's already past "quitting time," but since some of her co-workers are still in the office, she is apologizing for leaving ahead of them. The expression *o-saki ni* literally means "ahead of/in front of," and it can be used alone as a shortened form of this "Goodbye."



© Gyū & Kondō / *Eigyō Tenteko Nisshi*

Secretary: *O-saki ni shitsurei shimasu.*
"Goodbye." (PL3)
Chief: *O-tsukare-sama.*
"Goodbye." (PL3)

- *o-tsukare-sama* is another expression that can be used as a "Goodbye." It comes from the verb *tsukareru* ("become tired"), and is essentially a way of thanking someone for his/her hard work, so it can also be used at the end of any job or significant exertion, even when no one is ready to leave yet.



© Tamiya & Shinohara / *Boss*

After a meeting, this businessman uses the expression *shitsurei shimasu* somewhat like "Excuse myself" in English—to indicate that he's leaving.

Businessman: *Sore ja, watashi wa kono hen de shitsurei shimasu yo.*
"Well then, I'll excuse myself at this point." (PL3)

- *hen,* which can refer to a geographical "area/neighborhood," in this case refers to a place in time, so *kono hen* = "about now/about this time."

She is excusing herself temporarily from the table at a restaurant, so she adds *sukoshi* ("a little") to the beginning of the phrase. The man obscured by her "balloon" in this frame has asked to talk to her, and her boss is wondering what it's about.

© Tsukamoto Tomoko / *Karā-na Ai*

Woman: *Gomen-nasai senmu, sukoshi shitsurei shimasu.*
"I'm sorry sir, excuse me just a moment." (PL3)
Sound FX: *Gata!*
(sound of chair being pushed back)
Senmu: E!
(thinking) **"Huh?"**

- *senmu* = "managing director," that is, she's calling him by his title (as employees usually do). In English, she would probably be calling him Mr. (family name). We don't know his name, so we used "sir," although this doesn't really convey the tone of *senmu.*

You are being *shitsurei*

In the examples so far, *shitsurei* has been used as an apology for one's own behavior. In the following examples, it's used to refer to someone else's behavior.
In the next scene, *shitsurei* is used in its basic form, as a noun. The husband has been expressing his critical views of the entire medical profession in front of a doctor who is offering him a new treatment for his ailment. His wife finally tries to restrain him.

© Hanai & Miyahara / *Tottemo I'in*

Wife: *Anata, iisugi yo. Shitsurei da wa!*
"Honey, you're going too far (saying too much/expressing an extreme view). It's rude!" (PL2-Fem)
Husband: *Urusai!*
"Shut up!" (PL1)

- *anata* ("you") is used like "honey/dear" by Japanese wives when speaking to their husbands.
- *iisugi* = "saying too much" → "expressing extreme views"

© Wakabayashi Kenji / *Arashiyama Ikka*

The *oyaji*-gal has none of the gentle, obedient nature of the traditional Japanese woman. In this rather exaggerated example, Ms. Arashiyama pushes aside her immediate supervisor to complain directly to the department head about the treatment of one of her co-workers.

Supervisor: *Arashiyama-kun, kimi chotto shitsurei da yo. Sagaritamae!!*
"Arashiyama, you're being a little rude! Step back!! (PL2)
Sound FX: Gan
Bang
Supervisor: A . . .
"Ah . . ."

The adjective form

This woman is reacting to a snide remark that her boyfriend is an upstart who has nothing but his money to recommend him. The ending *-na* can be added to some nouns such as *shitsurei* to make an adjective form. Her exclamation implies a complete thought like *Shitsurei-na koto* ("[What a] rude thing [to say]."), or *Shitsurei-na hito* ("[What a] rude person!").

© Kariya & Hanasaki / *Oishinbo*

Shitsurei-na!
"How rude!" (PL2)

"Excuse me, but . . ."

The hotel has received a complaint about noise being made by other members of this woman's party. Before mentioning the problem, this hotel employee confirms that she is affiliated with the offending group — Tokyo World (an automobile sales company).

© Torii Kazuyoshi / *Top wa Ore Da!!*

Hotel Employee: *Anō, shitsurei desu ga, Tōkyō Wārudo no kata desu ka?*
"Uhh, excuse me, but are you with Tokyo World?" (PL3)
Sound FX: *Kacha*
Click (sound of lock turning over)

- *kata* ("person") is one step politer than *hito*.

On the phone

It sounds like a wrong number, but actually she's faking it. She was talking to her boyfriend when her boss walked into the room.

© Miyama Noboru / *Rat*

Secretary: *Shitsurei desu ga, donata ni o-kake desu ka?*
"Excuse me, but who are you calling?" (PL3)

- *donata* ("who") is more polite/formal than *dare*.
- *o-kake* is from the verb *kakeru* ("call [on the phone]"). This is a polite/honorific form.

It's hard to say goodbye without sounding abrupt, so *shitsurei shimasu* is a favorite way to end phone conversations.

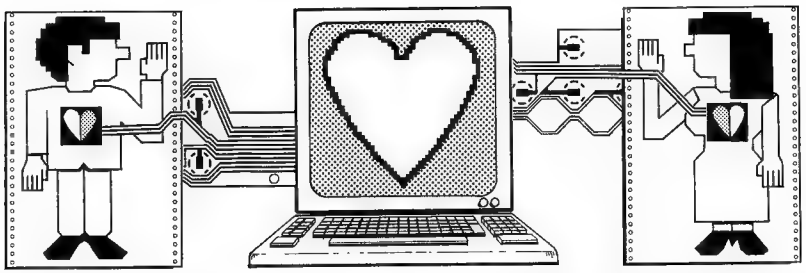
© Tsukamoto Tomoko / *Karā-na Ai*

Exec: *De wa, sō yū koto de,*
"Then, with that kind of arrangement,"
hai, de wa shitsurei shimasu!!
"yes, then, excuse me (goodbye)." (PL3)

Sound FX: *Gachan*
(sound of hanging up the phone)

- the double, small *tsu* at the end of *shimasu* indicate that it's cut off sharply—just like this lesson!

COMPUTERIZED MATCHMAKING



It's almost impossible to pick up a Japanese magazine now without finding at least one full-page ad like the one on the right—a picture of an attractive young woman and/or young man, with copy such as:

"How many people of the opposite sex will I be able to meet during my marriageable years?"

Along with the ad there is always a postage-paid questionnaire card which, in addition to the basic personal information (age, height, weight, blood type, occupation, income, education), includes ten or so "personality profile" questions covering topics such as degree of importance placed on lucky/unlucky days of the Buddhist calendar, opinions on professional boxing, level of confidence in one's own sense of fashion, etc. One of the most common "personality tests" involves ranking several colors by degree of preference.

You fill out the card, mail it in, and it's run through a computer. About a week later you're sent information on the potential partners you can meet through that service—but

Some Basic Terminology

- 結婚情報サービス (*kekkon jōhō sābisu*), literally "marriage information service," is the term generally used to describe introduction/matchmaking services which are marriage-oriented. Most of these are apparently legitimate businesses, but fees are in the ¥300,000 range for a two-year membership.
- 恋人診断 (*koibito shindan*), "sweetheart/lover diagnosis" is a term commonly used by agencies that cater to people more interested in dating than in tying the knot. Most advertising in this category seems to be targeted at males, and stories of "rip-offs" are more common than for *kekkon jōhō* agencies.
- 適齢期 (*tekirei-ki*), "[period of] marriageable age" is a term frequently used in advertisements for matchmaking services. *Tekirei* = literally "suitable/appropriate age," and the suffix *-ki* means "period of . . ."
- お見合い (*o-miai*) is the traditional system in which a *nakōdo* (仲人 "go-between") brings together a prospective bride and groom. As noted in MANGAJIN No. 3, *miai* is the noun form of the verb *miau*, which literally means "look (each other) over." *(O-)miai* (the *o-* is an honorific/"polite" prefix which can be dropped) refers to the meeting in which the two parties "look each other over," and if a wedding results, it's called a *miai kekkon*. If a wedding takes place without an *o-miai*, it can be called a *ren'ai kekkon* (恋愛結婚 "love marriage") by default.
- 軟派 (*nanpa*) refers to "flirting," or more specifically, "picking up." The verb form is *nanpa suru*. *Nan* (軟) literally means "soft," and ha (派) means "group/clique/school." This is in contrast to *kōha* (硬派 the "hard school" → straight arrows) who wouldn't dream of flirting or picking up members of the opposite sex.
- 合コン (*gōkon*) is a contraction of *gōdō* (合同 "combined/joint") *konpa* (コンパ a contracted, katakana derivative of the English word "companionship," referring to "socializing," especially when drinking is also involved). *Gōkon* are "mixers," especially those involving men's and women's college groups.

Advertising targeted at both men and women

The concept of *tekirei-ki* applies to both sexes, and this ad has appeared in men's as well as women's magazines.

(caption)
Tekirei-ki ni ittai nan-nin no isei to deaeru no darō.
"How many people of the opposite sex will I be able to meet during my marriageable years?"

- *tekirei-ki* = "period of marriageable age"
- *nan-nin* = "how many people," and *ittai* serves to intensify the question.
- *isei* = "opposite sex"
- *deaeru* = "(will) be able to meet"; it's the potential form of the verb *deau* ("meet/encounter").

Other OMMG ads feature copy such as:
Picture of a young lady, with the caption —
友だち以上,恋人未満には飽きました.
Tomodachi ijō, koibito miman ni wa akimashita.
"I've grown tired of more than a friend, but less than a lover."

Picture of a young man, with the caption —
僕の適齢期は僕が決める,とは言ったものの,世間が気になる.
Boku no tekirei-ki wa boku ga kimeru, to wa itta mono no, seken ga ki ni naru.
"I said I would decide when I was of marriageable age, but I'm concerned about what people think."

first, you have to pay a registration fee ranging from ¥20,000 to ¥300,000, or more.

There are an estimated 5,000 businesses in Japan classified as *kekkon jōhō sābisu* ("marriage information services"), many of them large and reputable firms. Many use *kekkon jōhō* in the company name, while others (some of which may be more along the lines of dating services) use names with endings like *Bunka Sentā* (Cultural Center), *Pāsonaru Sentā* (Personal Center), or *Yūsu Sentā* (Youth Center). As might be expected, there is a lot of katakana in these names since they are positioned as alternatives to the traditional *o-miai* "arranged marriages."

When an ad of any type continues to run for a long period of time, one can assume that it is getting results. Ads such as those shown on these pages have been running regularly in the Japanese media since the 1980's so they must be doing something right, or filling some kind of need.

The copy used in the ads provides some clues. For example, the young singles in the OMMG ad above are asking "How many people . . . will I be able to meet?" For some people, these services are simply a way of increasing their options. In addition to informal socializing at work (usually rather limited), they may try the occasional *o-miai*, and also join a *kekkon jōhō* service, just to see what's available.

Although ads targeted at women, or uni-sex ads such as the OMMG ad above are not unusual, the bulk of the advertising seems to be targeted at men. There are several factors involved here.

There is definitely social pressure on Japanese men to get married. Until a man takes on the responsibility of a wife and family, he is not considered to be a real adult. This attitude is the basis for an OMMG ad showing a young couple (in Japanese dress) with the copy *Kekkon shite, hajimete ichinin-mae. Sono imi ga sukoshi wakaru toshi ni natta.* ("It's only after you marry that you become a real adult. I've reached the age where I understand a little about what that means.") Being single past age 30 can hurt a man's career, especially in a big corporation. This attitude is reflected

Advertising targeted at women

Altmann is a German company, and their advertising tends to have a western touch. Some of their ads are uni-sex, but this one is from a women's magazine.

(caption)
Rainen no ima-goro wa jūn buraido ni naritai! Ga, ma ni au daro ka.
"This time next year I want to be a June bride! But, will I be in time?"

- *ima-goro* = "about now," so *rainen no ima-goro* is literally "about now of next year → this time next year."
- *ma ni au* = "be in time (for a train/event, etc.)"
- *darō*, the informal/abrupt (PL2) version of *deshō*, has been shortened to simply *daro*. This has something of a masculine tone, but women use this kind of speech when they are "talking to themselves/thinking aloud."

A matching ad on the flip side of this page features the following copy:
ご心配なく!アルトマンなら来年のジューンブライドに間に合いますよ!
Go-shinpai naku! Arutoman nara rainen no jūn buraido ni ma ni aimasu yo!
"Not to worry! With Altmann you'll be in time to be a June bride next year!"

in the copy of another OMMG ad which shows a young man saying *Boku no tekireiki wa boku ga kimeru, to wa itta mono no, seken ga ki ni naru* ("I said I would decide when I was of marriageable age, but I'm concerned about what people think.")

The situation is changing for Japanese women. They have more career options than they used to, and are better able to provide for themselves without having to rely on a husband. While remaining single still carries a certain social stigma, it does not bring the mandatory sentence of economic hardship that it once did. In addition, there have been reports in the Japanese press that more and more Japanese women feel that this world (the present environment) is just not a suitable place to bring up a child. Add to this the fact that there are about 1.5 times more single men than women in the marriageable 20–39 age range, and it's easy to see why Japanese women are becoming choosier about their marriage partners. It's not that they don't want to get married, they are just more likely to hold out for what's called *sankō* (三高) "the three highs"—a man who is tall, has a "high" academic background (graduated from a good school), and has a high income.

This makes it tough on the average young salary-man, especially those in occupations such as engineering, who put in long hours in a mostly male workplace. In the past, one recourse for a young man reaching marriageable age in such a situation was to ask his boss to help him find a bride. That is, the superior acted as *nakōdo* "go-between" in an *o-miai*. Now, the bosses claim that they are under too much business pressure and don't have time to help out their young charges. As a countermeasure, many large corporations have set up in-house agencies, usually referred to as *kekkon sōdan-jo* ("Marriage Consulting Offices"). The membership fee is typically one tenth of what ordinary commercial *kekkon jōhō* services charge, and because male employees of major "first-rate corporations" (*ichi-ryū kigyō*—Mitsubishi/Mitsui/Sumitomo, etc.) are considered highly desirable catches, women outnumber men in these groups 2:1. The "success rate" of completed marriages, however, is only about 10–15%, perhaps due to the fact that membership is restricted to employees of these corporations or affiliated companies. So this is not a complete solution to the problem.

The concept of *nanpa* (軟派) sometimes translated as "picking up girls on the street" (see our glossary at the beginning of this article), does exist in Japan, but for most Japanese men it's not a viable option for meeting women, much

Advertising targeted at men

There is no mention of marriage in this ad, obviously targeted at males. This type of ad frequently offers a free initial computer search and report within 7 days.

(caption)
Kimi ni pittari no kanojo wa donna onna no ko?
"What kind of girl is just the right girlfriend for you?"
(balloon)
Koibito kōho tesuto risāchi!
"Sweetheart candidate test research!"

How it works: You fill out the attached postcard (mostly information about the type of girl you want to meet) and send it in for a free computer search. You then receive a profile of your *koibito kōho* (恋人候補 "sweetheart candidate"). But, to actually make contact, you have to pay a ¥20,000 membership registration fee. One ruse used by unscrupulous agencies is to claim that the female had already started dating someone else, or declined for some other reason. They then offer to run you through the computer again —for another fee.

Our reporter in Tokyo responded to the ad on the left and received a suspiciously generic-looking "best partner profile." Since we had already exceeded our budget for this story, we didn't let him actually register, but he has been receiving regular phone calls from his "counselor" ever since — Sunday morning seems to be a favorite time.

less a way to find a prospective marriage partner. In fact, there really aren't even any establishments in Japan that would be called singles bars.

Gōkon ("mixers"—drinking parties for two mono-sex groups, these started as college functions, but are now popular on and off campus) provide a chance to meet that special someone, but the word from those who know their *gōkon* is "If you can't find a girlfriend elsewhere, chances are you won't be able to find one at a *gōkon*." *Naruhodo*.

For those who are feeling workplace, peer, parental, or self-imposed pressure to get married, *kekkon jōhō* services can at least provide hope. "Industry" sources claim that there are currently 250,000 people registered with *kekkon jōhō* services all over the country. This figure was zero back in 1978 when Altmann, the pioneer, set up shop in Japan. Altmann had started as an introduction service in post-WWII West Germany, and sensed that there was yen to be made by providing a similar service in Japan.

"Compatibility diagnosis—determining how suitable a particular man is for a particular woman—is very different in Japan and in Europe," reflects the Altmann founder (now in the securities business). "For example, there is the question of religion in Europe. Catholics and Protestants tend to avoid each other when they look for partners. In Japan, this is a very minor issue. We spent a long time developing a diagnostic structure fitted to the Japanese culture."

The heads of many of the major *kekkon jōhō* services now in Japan got their start with Altmann, and as a result, most companies offer pretty much the same fare. The industry leaders like OMMG, Sun Mark Life Creation, Altmann, SULC, Eternal Bridal, and Academic Unicharm all charge in the neighborhood of ¥300,000 for a two-year membership.

Members are entitled to a monthly list of prospective partners as determined by a computer analysis of their responses to a compatibility diagnosis questionnaire completed when they join the service. The list includes names and basic personal data for these prospects. If any of these look good on paper, the member can go down to the agency office and look at photos. If still interested, the agency will contact the

other party to see if the interest is mutual, and if all goes well, the initiator will receive a phone call or letter a few days later.

In addition, all major *kekkon jōhō* services hold dance parties, trips, and other functions every month to help members find partners on their own. At the parties held by Academic Unicharm, members wear a name tag, and are provided with a set of 15 name cards for use only at the party. The cards give first name, blood type, astrological sign, and membership number. Participants give the cards to people they like, and after the party, members can tell the staff the names of three people they would like to meet again. The staff then determines if the feelings are mutual. Members may also bypass this process and make dates on their own.

As the former president of Altmann notes,"The biggest problem with this system is that it works best for people who need no help. If a *sankō*—tall, good education, high income—man joins the service, he will enjoy plenty of chances, but such a man doesn't need this system."

According to an Altmann staff member, many women specify on their application that they are looking for a man with an annual income of over ¥10 million ($74,000). "When we tell them that very few members have that high an income, they look disappointed and select the next lower category, which is ¥6 million ($44,000), but in fact, only 13.3% of all male Altmann members claim an annual income of ¥6 million or more."

Concerning the male members, our Altmann staff contact comments, "Many of the young men who use our service are insensitive and mechanical. One type has absolutely no sense of the romantic—they look filthy and seem to be totally unconcerned about their personal appearance. Another type blindly follows 'love manuals' from men's magazines like Popeye and Hot Dog Press. They don't know what to do when things don't go as they expect."

A female member of Academic Unicharm complains,"I think men using this service have no passion—they are not assertive enough. Even when I meet a nice man at a party, we somehow wind up going out with a bunch of friends, not one-on-one."

Although all major services assign a counselor to each member, there are no lessons in romance or the art of communication. Even so, the services that disclose their "success ratio" claim that 25%–35% of their members wind up finding a partner through the service.

All through the 1980s the *kekkon jōhō* services enjoyed rapid growth, but that phase seems to have come to an end. One reason is that a small number of unscrupulous operators have created image problems for the entire "industry." In 1990, an "ultra-exclusive introduction agency" called *Rodan no Mori* (Rodin's Forest) which offered an absolute guarantee of marriage in exchange for a membership fee of ¥10 million ($74,000) was charged with fraud by the Tokyo Metropolitan Police. There have been cases of agencies which employed bar hostesses to pose as partner-seekers, and numerous complaints have been registered about being charged for supposedly free consultations, receiving too few introductions, and being unable to get out of expensive contracts. In December of 1990, twelve of the largest services formed an industry association to establish basic policies and standards.

Fraud is not the only problem facing these companies. Among the younger generation, there is a stigma attached to any kind of arranged marriage. The much-publicized romance in which the present emperor Akihito met his bride on the tennis court at Karuizawa, a fashionable resort, captured the imagination of the younger generation of the time and did much to promote the image of the "love marriage" as opposed to the traditional "arranged marriage." An Altmann staff member comments "Things are changing, but many people still hide from their friends the fact that they are using a *kekkon jōhō* service. If they find a partner and get married, they make up a story of a romantic encounter to tell their family and friends."

What does the future hold for computerized matchmaking in Japan? It's hard to predict, but like the computers that make the system possible, it seems certain that computerized matchmaking is here to stay.

How about *gaijin*? *Kekkon jōhō* services generally do not accept non-Japanese members. Explains an Altmann representative, "Compatibility is highest between a man and woman who share the same values. We are not in a position to recommend marriage between people from different cultures. It's not that we are racists, we simply go by the statistics."

Our contact at Academic Unicharm commented, "There is a lot of demand from single Asian men and women living in Japan, but right now we can't accept them because we use *koseki tōhon* (戸籍謄本, a copy of the family's census registration) as ultimate proof of the applicant's identity. It's a system unique to Japan. We do plan to review this point, and there should be some changes in the next few years."

In the meantime, there are plenty of international marriage agencies listed under 結婚紹介 (*kekkon shōkai*, "marriage introduction") or 結婚相談 (*kekkon sōdan*, "marriage consultation") in the Tokyo yellow pages. Most of these, however, specialize in "importing" brides, usually from Southeast Asian countries for the surplus of Japanese bachelors.

Compiled and written by: T.K. Ito (Tokyo), Virginia Murray (Atlanta), and R.U. Loveless (at large)

約　束

Title: *Yakusoku*
"Date/Promise"

1

Tanaka-kun: *Yūko-chan desu ka? Boku, Tanaka desu.*
"Is that Yūko-chan? It's me, Tanaka." (PL3)
Tanaka-kun: *Tsugi no Nichiyōbi, dēto shimasen ka?*
"Will (won't) you go on a date with me next Sunday?" (PL3)
Yūko-chan: *Chotto tsugō ga warui no . . .*
"It's a little inconvenient . . ." (PL2)

- *-chan* is a diminutive substitute for *-san*.
- *boku* is an informal masculine word for "I/me."
- *tsugi* = "next" • *Nichiyōbi* = "Sunday"
- *dēto* = "(a) date" • *dēto suru* = "go on a date"
- *shimasen* is the negative of *shimasu* / *suru*.
- *chotto* = "a little/slightly"
- *tsugō* means "convenience/circumstances," so *tsugō ga warui* is lit. "circumstances are unfavorable," i.e. "inconvenient."

2

Tanaka-kun: *Ja, tsugi no tsugi no Nichiyōbi wa?*
"Then, (how about) the Sunday after next?"
Yūko-chan: *Sono hi mo chotto . . .*
"That day is also a little . . ."
Tanaka-kun: *Ja, tsugi no tsugi wa?*
"Then, the one after the one after next?"
Yūko-chan: *Sono hi mo chotto . . .*
"That day is also a little . . ."

- *ja* is a contraction of *de wa* = "(Well), then."
- The questions are left unfinished, but the final *wa* implies an ending like *ikaga desu ka* — "how about/how is . . ."

3

Tanaka-kun: *Ja, tsugi no tsugi no tsugi no tsugi wa?*
"Then, the one after the one after the one after next?" (PL2)
Tanaka-kun: *Ja, tsugi no tsugi no tsugi no tsugi no tsugi no*
"Then, the one after the one after the one after the one after . . ." (PL2)
Yūko-chan: *Un! Wakatta.*
"Okay! Got it." (PL2)
Tanaka-kun: *Zettai da yo. Yakusoku shita yo.* (PL2)
"That's for sure now. (We) made a promise."

- *un* is an informal "yes."
- *wakatta* is the plain/abrupt past of *wakaru*, "be understood."
- *zettai* = "absolute/unconditional"
- *yakusoku shita* is the plain/abrupt past form of *yakusoku suru*, "make a promise/appointment."

4

Calendar: *Karendā*
Calendar
Tanaka-kun: *Ē to . . . Itsu ka na?*
"Let's see . . . When is that, anyway?" (PL2)

Title: *Nanbā-wan ni Naritai*
(I) Want to Become No. 1

- *naritai* ("want to become") is from the verb *naru* ("become").

1

Boyfriend: *Maki-chan, boku no koto dō omotte-iru no?*
"Maki, what do you think about me?" (PL2)
Maki: *Suki yo.*
"I like you." (PL2)

- *-chan* is a diminutive equivalent of *-san* used with first names
- *boku* is an informal, masculine word for "I/me."
- *koto* = "things/facts" • *boku no koto* = "about me"
- *omotte-iru* is from the verb *omou* ("think/consider").
- *suki* ("like") is actually a noun, so the PL3 form of her sentence would be *Suki desu yo.*

2

Boyfriend: *Koibito to shite? tomodachi to shite?*
"As a lover? As a friend?" (PL2)
Maki: *N—, yoku wakanna—i.*
"Mmm, I don't really know." (PL2)

- *koibito* = "lover/sweetheart" • *to shite* = "in the capacity of"
- *yoku* is an adverb meaning ("well/fully")
- *wakannai* is a colloquial "contraction" of *wakaranai*, the plain/abrupt negative form of *wakaru* ("know/understand").

3

Boyfriend: *Ja, bii-effu no naka de nan-ban-me?*
"Then, among your boyfriends what number am I?" (PL2)
Maki: *Sonna no kimerarena—i.* (PL2)
"I can't say/determine something like that."

- *B.F. no naka* = "among/of (your) boyfriends"
- *nan-ban* = "what number," *me* is used to show sequence.
- *kimerarenai* is the negative form of the verb *kimerareru* ("can decide/determine") from *kimeru* ("decide/determine").

4

Maki: *Aitsu tsumannai koto kiku kara yon ranku daun ne.*
"That guy asks silly questions so (he's) down 4 notches." (PL2)
Maki: *Sekkaku aka-maru jōshō-chū datta no ni . . .*
(under her breath) **"Just when he was rising with a red circle . . ."** (PL2)
Chart: *Kon-getsu no bii-effu hitto chāto*
This month's hit boyfriends chart

- *aitsu* is a semi-slang word for "that guy/he"
- *tsumannai* is a colloquial form of *tsumaranai* ("boring/stupid")
- *kiku* = "ask"
- *ranku* is "rank" in katakana. • *daun* is "down" in katakana.
- *sekkaku* implies that a thing or situation is special/long awaited → "just when . . ."
- *aka-maru* ("red circle") is like a "bullet" on the Top 40 list.
- *jōshō-chū* = "in the midst of rising/ascending"
- *no ni* after a verb = "even though/in spite of the fact that."

玉の輿の資格

Title: *Tama no Koshi no Shikaku*
Qualifications for "Marrying Up"

- *tama no koshi* literally means "jeweled palanquin," but it's used to refer to marriage into a high-ranking or wealthy family. In this manga, the term is used in a facetious way.

1

OL 1: *Kon'yaku omedeto—. .*
"Congratulations on your engagement."
Aite wa shachō no musuko da tte? Sugoi ne—.
"Did they say he's a company president's son? That's really something, isn't it." (PL2)
OL 2: *Sonna . . .*
"(It's not) such a . . ." (PL2)

- *kon'yaku* = "engagement (to be married)"
- *omedetō* = "congratulations" (cf. *Basic Japanese*, No. 6)
- *aite* refers to the "other party/person"
- this *tte* indicates hearsay — "They say . . ./I hear that . . ."
- *sugoi* can mean "fantastic/terrific" or "horrible/terrible."
- *sonna* ("that kind of/such a") is an abbreviated response.

2

OL 2: *Chiisa-na kaisha na no yo.*
"It's a small company. (PL2)
Taishita koto nai no yo, honto.
Nothing to brag about, really." (PL2)

- *chiisa-na* ("small") is another form of the adjective *chiisai.*
- *na no yo* is an informal, feminine way to end a sentence.
- *taishita koto nai* = "no big deal/nothing important"
- *hontō* ("really") is often shortened to *honto* in colloquial speech.

3

OL 1: *Mata mata go-kenson—.*
"Oh, you're being modest again."
Yappari, futsū no sararīman to kekkon suru no to wa chigau desho?
"It really is different from marrying an ordinary salaryman, isn't it?" (PL2)

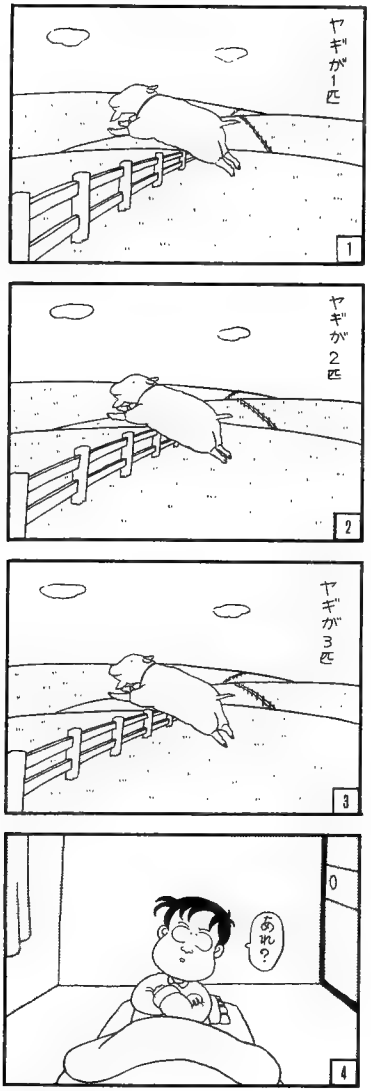
- *mata mata* = "once again"
- *go-kenson* = honorific form of *kenson* ("modesty/humility").
- *yappari* = colloquial form of *yahari* ("after all/as expected").
- *chigau* is a verb meaning "differ from/be contrary to."

4

OL 2: *Un . . . kekkon suru made ni boki ni-kyū o tore tte iwarete n no.*
"Yeah . . . I was told to get level 2 bookkeeping certification by the time we get married." (PL2)
Sound FX: *Hē*
"How about that." (expression of surprise)
OL 1: *. . . Honto ni chiisai n da na—*
(thinking) **". . . It really is small, isn't it."** (PL2)

- *made ni* = "by (the time)/not later than"
- *tore* is an abrupt command form of the verb *toru* ("take/get").
- *iwarete n no* is a contraction of *iwarete-(i)ru no (desu)* = "(it's that I'm) being told to → I was told to".

違和感



Title: *Iwakan*
A Feeling of Discord
→ Something's Not Right

- *iwa* = "disorder/discord/disharmony" and the suffix *-kan* means "feeling/sense," so *iwakan* refers to a feeling/sense that something is out of order/not as it should be.

1

Narration: *Yagi ga ippiki*
One goat

- *yagi* = "goat(s)"
- *ippiki* is a combination of *ichi* ("one") and *-hiki*, the counter suffix for small- to medium-sized animals other than birds. *-hiki* changes to *-ppiki* in some combinations which would otherwise be difficult to say, such as one (*ippiki*), six (*roku* + *hiki* = *roppiki*), eight (*hachi* + *hiki* = *happiki*), and ten (*jū* + *hiki* = *juppiki*); and to *-biki* for three (*sanbiki*). "How many (animals)" is *nanbiki* (*nani* + *hiki*).

2

Narration: *Yagi ga nihiki*
Two goats

3

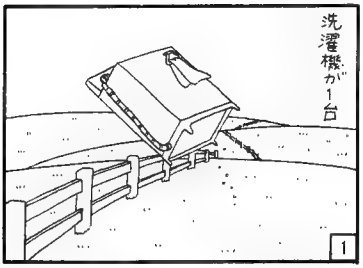
Narration: *Yagi ga sanbiki*
Three goats

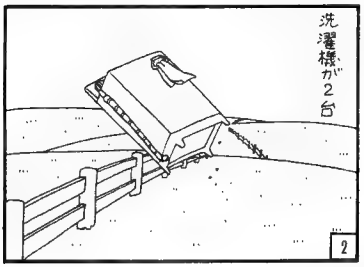
4

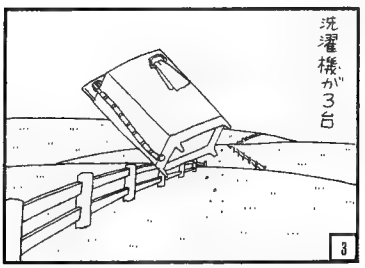
Boy: *Are?*
"Huh?"

- *are*, spoken with the rising tone of a question, expresses puzzlement/surprise at something that has taken an unexpected turn.

疑　問







Title: *Gimon*
A Question

- *gimon* = "question/doubts"

1 **Narration**: *Sentakuki ga ichidai*
One washing machine

- *sentaku* = "laundry"; *sentakuki* = "washing machine"
- *-dai* is the counter suffix for a wide variety of machines and vehicles — ranging from typewriters to trucks, including pianos and beds.

2 **Narration**: *Sentakuki ga nidai*
Two washing machines

3 **Narration**: *Sentakuki ga sandai*
Three washing machines

4 **Boy**: *Are—!?*
"Hu-u-uh?"

サラリ君

西村 宗

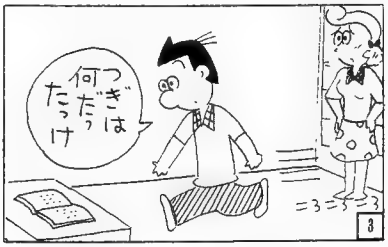
1

Sarari-kun: *Umu umu.*
"Uh-huh, uh-huh."

2

Wife: *Ueki no te-ire ga sundara, tsugi wa nani?*
"When you've finished trimming the shrubs, what's next?" (PL2)

- *ueki* = "garden shrubs/trees" — *ue* is from the verb *ueru* ("plant/set out/grow").
- *te-ire* = "care/maintenance" → "trimming (of shrubs)." This is written with the kanji for "hand" (*te*), and *ire*, from the verb *ireru* ("put in/add to").
- *sundara* is a conditional "if/when" form of the verb *sumu* ("is finished"), so *ueki no te-ire ga sundara* literally means "When the care/trimming of the garden shrubs is finished."
- *tsugi* = "next"
- In informal speech, *nani* ("what?") can stand alone as a question ("What is . . . ?").



3

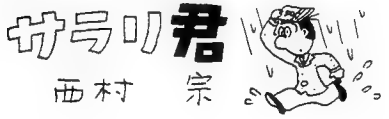
Sarari-kun: *Tsugi wa nan datta kke?*
"What was next? (I can't recall.)" (PL2)

- *nan* = *nani* ("what").
- *datta* is the informal (PL2) form of *deshita* ("was/were").
- The particle *kke* is used when asking a question about something you know, but have forgotten—an attempt to recall. Even though he's speaking aloud, he's really talking to himself.

4

Book Title: *Yoka no Sugoshi-kata*
How to Spend (Your) Leisure Time

- *yoka* = "leisure time" (actually written with the kanji for "excess [*YO/ama(ru)*] leisure [*KA/hima*]").
- *sugoshi-kata* is from the verb *sugosu* ("spend/pass time") and the suffix *-kata* ("how to–/the way of–")



1

Sarari-kun: *Maru-maru shōji ga tōsan desu.*
"Blank-blank Enterprises has gone bankrupt." (PL3)

- The small circles indicate blanks and are read *maru-maru* (lit. "circle circle").
- *shōji* (literally, "commercial/business affairs") is one of the standard suffixes added to the names of businesses.
- *tōsan* = "insolvency/bankruptcy," and *tōsan suru* = "go bankrupt." Although this sentence looks like "Blank-blank Enterprises is bankruptcy," this is an example of how the versatile *desu* serves as a kind of "shorthand" for communicating various situations.

2

Sarari-kun: *Urikake-kin ga kaishū dekinaku narimashita.*
"The accounts receivable have become uncollectable" → **"We won't be able to collect the accounts receivable."** (PL3)

- *urikake* = "credit sales"; *uri* is from the verb *uru* ("sell"), and *kake* refers to "credit/on account." • the suffix *-kin* is written with the kanji for "money."
- *kaishū* = "recovery/collection"
- *dekinaku* is the adverb form of *dekinai* ("cannot do"), and *narimashita* is the PL3 past form of *naru* ("become"), so *(kaishū) dekinaku narimashita* means "(it) became so that (we) cannot do (collection)" → "has become impossible (to collect)."

3

Sarari-kun: *To ho ho ho*
(quiet, restrained sobbing)
Boss: *Naku na. Natsu no bōnasu o akiramereba ii.*
"Don't cry. All you have to do is give up your summer bonus." (PL2)

- *naku* = "cry" • *na* (with a falling tone) after the plain form of a verb makes an abrupt negative command.
- *natsu* = "summer" • *bōnasu* is the English word "bonus" rendered in katakana.
- *akiramereba* is a conditional "if/when" form of *akirameru* ("give up on").
- *-reba ii* added to a verb literally means "it will be good/okay if you . . ." but often has the idiomatic meaning of "all you have to do is . . ."

4

Sarari-kun: *Wān*
(unrestrained wailing)

1

Narration: *Obatarian wa atsugari de aru.*
Obatarian is sensitive to the heat. (PL2)
Husband: *Mata bentō ka. Hiya mugi ka nan ka kuitai nā.*
"A box lunch again? I'd sure like to have iced noodles or something . . ." (PL2)
Box: *Hoko hoko Bentō*
Piping Hot Box Lunch

- *atsugari(ya)* refers to someone who is sensitive to heat, or who tends to complain about the heat. (from *atsui*, "hot")
- *hiya mugi* (lit. "cold wheat/barley") = "iced noodles"
- *. . . ka nan ka* = ". . . or something/or some such"
- *kuitai* = "want to eat," from *kuu*, a slang, masculine word for "eat," and the verb ending *-tai* ("want to —")
- *hoko hoko* is a made-up word, a play on *hoka hoka* ("hot/steaming") *Hoka hoka Bentō* is the name of a popular chain selling these box lunches. This scene is like having a pizza take-out box sitting on the dinner table for the evening meal.

2

Obatarian: *Kono atsui no ni sōmen nan ka yudete-rannai wa yō!*
"In this heat, I can't stand to boil any noodles or anything!" (PL2)

- *sōmen* are thin noodles, usually eaten in the summer.
- *yudete-rannai* is a slang contraction of *yudete-irarenai*, "I can't stand to boil (noodles)." *yudete* is from *yuderu* ("boil"), and *irarenai* is the plain negative of *irareru* ("can be/can endure"), from *iru* ("be").
- *wa yo* is an emphatic ending used in feminine speech.

3

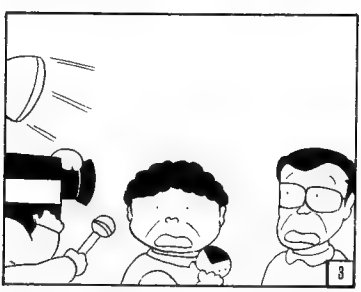
Obatarian: *Anta wa kaisha de kūrā ni atatte-rya ii deshō ga . . .*
"I guess you're all right if you enjoy the air conditioner at work, but . . ." (PL2)
Husband: *Wakatta, wakatta! Jibun de yuderu!* (PL2)
"All right, all right! I'll boil them myself!"

- *anta* is an informal contraction of *anata* ("you").
- *kūrā* = "air conditioner" (from the English "cooler").
- *atatte-rya* is a colloquial version/contraction of *atatte-ireba*, the conditional ("if") form of *atatte-iru* (from *ataru*, "be exposed to/expose oneself to").
- *deshō* is a form of *desu* ("is") meaning "I suppose." The final *ga* means "but," implying ". . . but I'm not so lucky."
- *jibun* means "oneself," so *jibun de* is "by myself."

4

Obatarian: *Futari bun ne.*
"Enough for two, okay?" (PL2)

- *futari* = "two people" • *bun* = "portion/serving"



1

Narration: *Obatarian wa mie o haru.*
Obatarian is pretentious. (PL2)

Obatarian: *Anta—, itsu made konna boro-apāto ni sunde-ru no yo!*
"Hey, how long are we going to live in this run-down apartment!" (PL2)
Mittomonai ttara arya shina . . .
"Nothing could be this disgraceful . . ."

- *mie* = "appearance/display"; *mie o haru* means "be pretentious/put on airs."
- *boro* is used as a prefix meaning "shabby/run down"
- *apāto* = "apartment"
- *sunde-(i)ru* is from *sumu* "live/dwell."
- *itsu made* = "until when" → "how long"
- *mittomonai* = "unsightly/gross/shameful"
- *. . . ttara* is a contraction of *. . . to ittara*, a conditional "if/when" form of *to iu* ("say"). So, *ttara* literally means "if (you) say/talk about . . ." (cf. *Ningen Kōsaten*, fr. 34)
- *arya shina* is a contraction of *ari wa shinai*, a colloquial way of forming the negative of the verb *aru*. A literal translation might be "Talk about unsightly — nothing could be like this!" (cf. *Ningen Kōsaten*, fr. 34)

2

TV Man: *Shitsurei shimāsu! Buji TV no "Totsuzen Hōmon O-Jama Shimāsu" dēsu!*
"Excuse us! We're from Buji TV's "Sudden Visit, Sorry to Bother You!"" (PL3)

Sound FX: *Batan*
Sound of door slammed open

- *shitsurei shimasu* is the ordinary polite form of *shitsurei suru*, lit. "be impolite." See the Basic Japanese column in this issue.
- *Buji TV* is a play on Fuji TV, a major Japanese network.
- *o-jama shimasu*, a polite form of *jama suru* ("intrude/disturb"), is a kind of greeting used when entering someone's house.

4

Obatarian: *Su-sukkari naga-i shimashite . . . okusan ni yoroshiku . . .*
"I, I've stayed entirely too long . . . my regards to your wife . . ." (PL4)

- *sukkari* = "completely/entirely"
- *naga-i shimashite* is a very polite *-te* form of *naga-i suru* (from *nagai*, "long," and *iru*, "be"): "stay (too) long."
- *okusan* is a polite term for "(someone else's) wife."
- *yoroshiku* (from *yoroshii*, "good") is short for *yoroshiku o-tsutae kudasai*, a standard expression meaning "please (convey) best regards." Obatarian is using polite speech to pose as a visitor.

第160話 ふたりの花火大会
キャッ キャッ
いよいよツユが明けて
暑い夏がきた
扇風機のないオレは
窓を開け 部屋を暗くして
少しでも涼をとる
1
2
3

Title: *Futari no Hanabi Taikai*
Fireworks Jamboree for Two

- *hanabi* = "fireworks" — written with the kanji for "flower" (*hana*) and "fire" (*hi* → *bi*).
- *taikai* (lit. "big meeting") is used for a wide variety of large or special gatherings/conventions/conferences. A *taikai* for two has a manga-like, humorous touch.

1

Narration: *Iyo-iyo tsuyu ga akete atsui natsu ga kita.*
At last the rainy season ended and the hot summer arrived. (PL2)
Senpūki no nai ore wa, mado o ake, heya o kuraku shite sukoshi de mo ryō o toru.
Having no fan, I opened the window and turned out the lights (darkened the room) to get even a small measure of coolness. (PL2)

Sound FX: *Kya! Kya!*
(squeals of delight, or of being mildly startled)

Sound FX: *Shū*
(hissing or sizzling sound of shooting sparks)

- *iyo-iyo* = "finally/at last"
- *tsuyu* is the Japanese rainy season, usually lasting about five or six weeks from early June to mid-July.
- *akete* is the *-te* form of *akeru*, which literally means "(something) opens" but is used in certain expressions to mean "end/be over": *yo ga akeru* is literally "the night opens (into day)" → "the night ends/the day dawns"; *tsuyu ga akeru* is "the rainy season opens (into the hot summer)" → "the rainy season ends."
- *atsui* = "hot" • *natsu* = "summer"
- *kita* is the plain/abrupt past form of *kuru* ("come/arrive")
- *senpūki* = "(electric) fan" • *senpūki ga nai* is a complete thought/sentence ("don't have a fan"), but because this modifies a noun, *ga* changes to *no*.
- *ore* is an informal/abrupt masculine form of "I/me," so *senpūki no nai ore* is literally "I, who have no fan."
- *mado* = "window"
- *ake* is a continuing form of the verb *akeru*, "to open (something)". Note that the verb is written with a different kanji when it's used in the more literal sense (with a direct object).
- *heya* = "room"
- *kuraku* is the adverb form of *kurai* ("dark/dim"), and *kuraku suru* = "make dark" → "turn out the lights." *kuraku shite* is the continuing form, "turned out the lights, and . . ."
- *sukoshi* = "a little/small amount" • *sukoshi de mo* = "even a little"
- *ryō o toru* is literally "take (some) cool(ness)" but might more naturally be rendered in English as "get some relief from the heat."

3

Sound FX: *Kya! Kya! A ha ha.*
(squeals; laughter)

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あー
5
カラン
カラン
平和荘
4
おわったー
7
6
ふあ～
10
9
ちゃんとあと始末してね
8

4

Signs: *Heiwa-sō*
Peace Apartments/Peace Villa
Sound FX: *Karan karan*
(sound of wooden *geta* sandals striking pavement)

- *heiwa* = "peace"
- the suffix *-sō* is commonly used in the names of apartment buildings (usually Japanese style). It's also used in compounds to mean "house/cottage" (*bessō* = "a second house in the country").

5

Boy: Ā
"Ah"

6

Boy: *Owatta—.*
"It's finished." (PL2)

- *owatta* is the plain/abrupt past form of *owaru* ("be over/finished"). Ending it with a long vowel could be an expression of the boy's disappointment.

8

Mother: *Chan-to ato-shimatsu shite ne.*
"Properly clean up after yourselves, okay." (PL2)
Girl: *Ha—i.*
"Oka-a-y."

- *chan-to* = "properly/neatly/correctly"
- *ato-shimatsu shite* combines *ato* ("after/afterwards") with the *-te* form of *shimatsu suru* ("dispose of/attend to/take care of [something]"). The *-te* form is being used as a gentle command — like *shite kudasai* without the *kudasai*.
- *ne* shows that the speaker expects the listener to agree/obey, but also makes the command feel "softer."

9

Kōsuke: *Fuā*
(letting out a deep breath/sigh)

花火を見そこねてしまったオレはそのまま夜の散歩で涼むことにした
カラン
カラン
カラン
カラン
井田の湯
さわ。
カラン
カラン
カラン
11
12
13
14
15
16
17

11

Narration: *Hanabi o mi-sokonete shimatta ore wa, sono mama yoru no sanpo de suzumu koto ni shita.* **Having missed seeing the fireworks, I decided to go on from there to cool off with an evening walk.** (PL2)

Sound FX: *Karan karan*
(sound of wooden *geta* sandals on pavement)

- *mi-sokonete* combines *miru* ("see/watch") with the *-te* form of *sokoneru* (or *sokonau*), which when added to a verb means "to fail to (do something)" or "to miss (doing something)."
- *shimatta* following the *-te* form of a verb can simply indicate completion of the action, but here it carries a feeling of regret over what happened.
- *hanabi o mi-sokonete shimatta* is a complete thought/sentence ("missed seeing the fireworks") modifying *ore* ("I/me"), which makes it literally "I, who missed seeing the fireworks . . ."
- *sono mama* = "continuing as is/without doing anything else" (in this case, without going back inside)
- *yoru* = "evening/night" • *sanpo* = "a walk"
- *suzumu* = "cool off/enjoy the cool (night) air" *de* indicates how/with what an action will be done, so *sanpo de suzumu* is literally "cool off with/by means of a walk."
- *koto ni shita* is the plain/abrupt past of *koto ni suru*, a phrase added to the plain/abrupt present form of verbs to indicate "decid(ed) to (do)."

12

Sound FX: *Karan*
(sound of wooden *geta* sandals on pavement)

13

Noren: *Kameida no Yu*
Kameida Baths
Attendant: *Arigatō*
"Thanks"

- *yu* literally means "hot water," but is used to refer to a bath, bath house, or even a hot spring spa.

14

FX: *Sawa!*
(effect of clean, fresh fragrance and/or feeling)

- *Sawa!* is an FX version of *sawayaka-na* ("refreshing/invigorating")

15

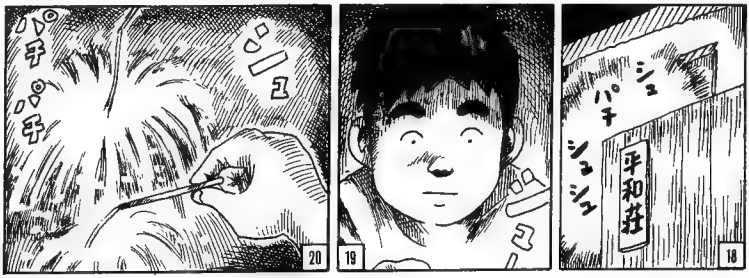
Sound FX: *Karan*
(sound of *geta* on pavement)

16

Sound FX: *Karan*

17

Sound FX: *Karan*


シュ
パチ
シュシュ
平和荘
18
19
20

夜の散歩で心がちょっとざわめいた数日後
オレはカノジョと花火をした　カノジョがいつも以上にキレイに見えた
パチ
パチ
シュワ
21

18

Sound FX: *Shu patchi shu shu*
Hiss crackle hiss hiss (sound of fireworks)

19

Sound FX: *Shū*
Hissss

20

Sound FX: *Shu patchi patchi*
Hiss crackle crackle

21

Narration: *Yoru no sanpo de kokoro ga chotto zawameita sūjitsu-go, ore wa kanojo to hanabi o shita.*
Several days after my heart stirred a little during that evening walk, I did some fireworks with my girlfriend. (PL2)
Kanojo ga itsumo ijō ni kirei ni mieta.
She looked prettier than usual. (PL2)
Sound FX: *Shuwa patchi patchi*
Hiss, crackle crackle

- *kokoro* = "heart/mind"
- *chotto* = "a little/small amount" (less formal than *sukoshi* in frame 1)
- *zawameita* is the plain/abrupt past form of *zawameku* ("be stirred/disturbed/in a commotion").
- *yoru no sanpo de kokoro ga chotto zawameita* is a complete sentence/thought ("My heart stirred a little during an evening walk").
- *sūjitsu* literally means "a number of days" → "several days," and *sūjitsu-go* means "after a few days/several days later."
- *kanojo to* = "with her/my girlfriend"; *kanojo* is a pronoun for "she/her," but it is also commonly used to mean "girlfriend." Likewise, *kare* can mean either "he/him" or "boyfriend." Katakana versions of the English words "boyfriend" and "girlfriend" are also used quite commonly.
- *itsumo* = "always/usually" • *ijō ni* = "more than" • *itumo ijō ni* = "more than always/usual"
- *kirei* = "pretty/beautiful," and *kirei ni* is its adverb form.
- *mieta* is the plain/abrupt past form of *mieru*, which means "looks (like)/appears (as)" when it follows the adverb form of an adjective, so *kirei ni mieta* means "looked pretty."

よ〜〜〜し
しまって
いこうぜ
!!
1

Vol.24
白球に賭けるマイケル
ニャア
〜〜〜
ッ
CAT
CATFOOD
2

いいか
〜〜〜!!
猫なんかに
負けるんじゃ
ないぞ〜〜〜
ワン!!
DOGFOOD
3

プレイ
ボール!!
CAT
4

1

Captain: *Yōshi*
"All right!"
Shimatte-ikō ze—!!
"Let's tighten it up!!" (PL2)

- *shimatte* is from the verb *shimaru*, which means "close/shut," or "tighten" in the literal as well as figurative sense. In this case it implies "avoid making errors."
- *ikō* is the plain version of *ikimashō* ("let's go"), from the verb *iku* ("go").
- *ze* is an emphatic particle used primarily by males of approximately the same age group and social level — don't use it when speaking to your boss. It's somewhat stronger/rougher than *yo*, but milder than *zo*.

2

Title: *Hakkyū ni Kakeru Maikeru*
Michael Risks/Stakes It (All) on the White Ball

Cats: *Nyā—!*
"Meoow!"

- *hakkyū* = "white ball"
- *kakeru* can mean "wager/bet," but in this case it has more of the feeling of "make great efforts, with considerable risk."
- *hakkyū ni kakeru* is a complete thought/sentence ("risk/stake it on the white ball") that modifies *Maikeru* → "Michael who risks/stakes it on the white ball."

3

Captain: *Ii ka—!! Neko nanka ni makeru n ja nai zo—!*
"All right!? We're not going to lose to a bunch of cats!" (PL2)
Dogs: *Wan!!*
"Ruff!!"

- *ii* ("good") and *ka* (question marker) make a rhetorical question, like "Have you got it?!/Understand!?" or "Are you ready for this!?"
- *nanka* means "something like/the likes of," and in this case indicates contempt for the word that precedes it.
- *makeru* = "lose/be defeated"
- *. . . n ja nai (zo)* can be used to make a negative command ("don't lose to a bunch of cats"), although we have translated it as a statement of intent ("we're not going to lose . . .")

4

Umpire: *Purei bōru!!*
"Play ball!!"

- in case you didn't recognize him, the umpire is *Gojira* (Godzilla), who makes frequent guest appearances in this series.
- much baseball terminology is taken from English, although at one time (during WWII) purely Japanese words were used, e.g., *tōshu* (lit. "the throwing hand") instead of the current *pitchā*, etc.
- the "Cat Food" and "Dog Food" uniforms reflect the corporate sponsorship of professional baseball teams in Japan, e.g., Yakult Swallows, Yomiuri Giants, Nippon Ham Fighters, etc.

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がんばれ
ポチ～～～
よ～～～し
こい!!
5
……
6
カーブだ
7
だめ!!
ピッ
8
シュート
9
OK!!
ピッ
10
ニャッ
11
ワン!!
12

5

Sound FX: *Wā wā wā wā*
(sound of yelling and cheering)
Batter: *Yōshi koi!!*
"All right, come on!!" (PL2)
Dogs: *Ganbare Pochi—*
"Show 'em your stuff, Pochi!" (PL2)

- *koi!* ("come (on)!") is the abrupt command form of the verb *kuru* ("come"). The implication is "What are you waiting for? I'll knock it over the fence!"
- *ganbare* is the abrupt command form of the verb *ganbaru* = ("Hang in there!/Go for it!/Do your best!")
- *Pochi* is a popular name for (male) dogs.

7

Catcher: *Kābu da.*
(signaling) **"Curve."**

8

FX: *Pi!*
(effect of Michael's ears turning back with a twitch)
Michael: *Dame!!*
(signaling with his ears) **"No!!"**

9

Catcher: *Shūto*
(signaling) **"Slider"** — a "reverse curve" — note the paw going in the opposite direction from the previous signal.

10

Fx: *Pi!*
(action of Michael's ears twitching back up)
Michael: *Ōkē!!*
"OK!!"

11

Michael: *Nya!*
"Meow!"
FX: *Za!*
(effect of the sudden release and forward rush of the ball)

12

Sound FX: *Kān*
Clang! (sound of a solid hit)
Batter: *Wan!!*
"Ruff!!"

やった
いけいけ
ワン
ダダダダ
ニャッ
13
ダダダダ
14
コロ…
コロコロ…
15
……
16
ニャンニャン
ニャーン
コロコロ…
ダダダダ
17
ジャレてあそぶな
二塁だ二塁だ!!
18
よーし
二塁打だ!!
19
ニャロッ!!
20

13

Dogs: *Yattā / Ike ikē!*
"(You) did it!" / "Go! Go!!" (PL2-1)
Sound FX: *Wā wā wā wā*
(roar of the crowd)
Batter: *Wan*
"Ruff!"
Sound FX: *Da da da!*
(sound of rapid footsteps)
Cats: *Nya!*
"Meow!"

- *yatta!* ("you/I/we did it!") is the plain past form of the verb *yaru* ("do").
- *ike* is the abrupt command form of the verb *iku* ("go").

14

Sound FX: *Da da da da*
(sound of running feet)

15

FX: *Koro koro koro . . .*
(sound/effect of a small object rolling continuously)

16

FX: *Koro . . ,*
(a shorter, more abrupt rolling movement)

17

Cat 1: *Nyan nyan*
"Meow meow"
Cat 2: *Nyān*
"Meoooow"
FX: *Koro koro . . .*
(sound/effect of the ball rolling on)
Sound FX: *Da da da da da*
(sound of running feet)

18

Catcher: *Jarete asobu-nā! / Ni-rui da. Ni-rui—!!*
"Don't romp/fool around!" / "Second base! Second Base!!" (PL2)

- *jarete* is the *-te* form of the verb *jareru* = "romp/frolic (especially referring to animals)."
- *asobu* = "play," but in the sense of "relax/enjoy oneself," not "play (baseball)."
- *asobu-na* is an abrupt negative command → "don't play/stop playing!"
- *rui* = "base," *ni-rui* = "second base"

19

Runner: *Yōshi / Ni-rui-da da—!!*
"All right!" / "It's a double!!" (PL2)
Sound FX: *Da ta!*
(sound of running feet)

- *ni-rui-da* = "two base hit." The *da* in *ni-rui-da* means "hit" and is read ***u(tsu)*** when used as a verb.
- the final *da* (*ni-rui-da* *da*) is the plain/abrupt form of *desu*.

(continued on next page)

ミュビビビ…
二塁
21
よ〜〜しホームだ〜〜!!
ワン!!
23
なにくそ!!
24
ニャッ
ダダダダッ
25
ブーン
26
セェ〜〜フ!!
7
27

(continued from previous page)

20

FX: *Ba!*
(effect of a sudden motion — throwing the ball)
Cat: *Nyaro!!*
"Me-yow!!"

- coming from a cat, *Nyaro* sounds like a variation on the standard *nyā* ("meow") sound, but it also sounds like a corruption of the insult/expletive *yarō* ("guy/bum"), or a contraction of *kono yarō* → *kon yarō* → *n yarō*.

21

Sound FX: *Shu bi bi bi . . .*
(sound of the ball soaring overhead and then dropping into the distance)
Sign: *Ni-rui*
Second base

22

Catcher: *Nani o hito-yasumi shite-ru n da, ni-rui—!!*
"What are (you) doing taking a break, second base?!" (PL2)
FX: *Koro koro*
(effect of the baseball rolling away)
Sound FX: *Wā wā wā wā*
(roar of the crowd)
Da da da!
(sound of running feet)
Dogs: *Yattā!* / *Ike ikē!*
"(You) did it! / **Go! Go!!"** (PL2)

- *nani* = "what." This construction, *nani o . . .* is rather colloquial, but the meaning is clear from the catcher's expression.
- *hito-* is a prefix meaning "one," and *yasumi* is from the verb *yasumu* = "rest/take a break," so *hito-yasumi* = "a break/rest."
- *shite-ru* is from the verb *suru* ("do"). *hito-yasumi suru* = "take a (short) break/rest."
- *ni-rui*, literally "second base," is used here to address the cat playing that position.

23

Base Coach: *Yōshi, hōmu da—!!*
"All right, (go for) home!!" (PL2)
Sound FX: *Da da da*
(running feet)
Runner: *Wan!!*
"Ruff!!"

24

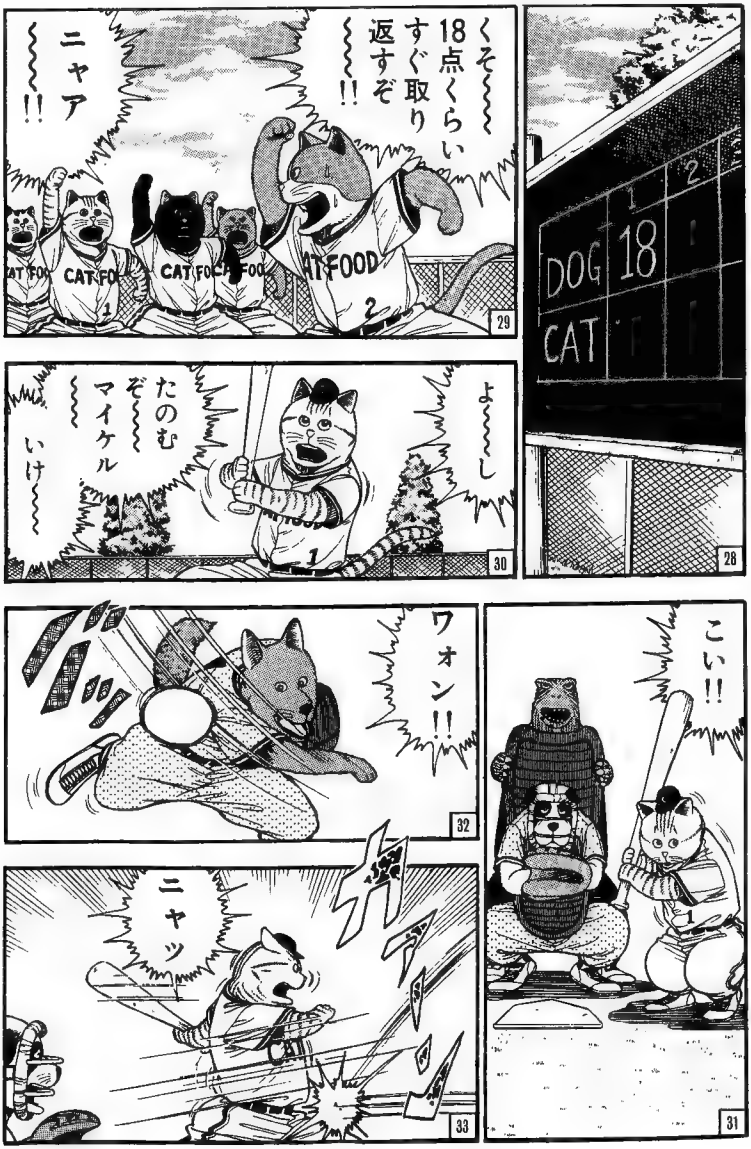
Outfielder: *Nani-kuso!!*
"Damn it!!" (PL1)
FX: *Ba!*
(effect of a sudden motion — throwing the ball)

- *kuso* means "shit/crap," but is milder and more widely used than these English words. This usage of *nani* is more like "Well, (shit)" than its literal meaning of "what."

25

Sound FX: *Da da da!*
(running feet)
Catcher: *Nya!*
"Meow!"

(continued on next page)


DOG 18
CAT
28
こい!!
31
ワォン!!
32
ニャッ
33
よ〜〜し
いけ〜〜
たのむぞ〜〜マイケル
30
くそ〜〜〜
18点くらい
すぐ取り返すぞ〜〜〜!!
ニャア〜〜〜!!
CAT FOOD
29

(continued from previous page)

26

Sound FX: *Buuun*
Buzzz (sound of the insect flying by)

27

Umpire: *Sā—fu!!*
"Safe!!"

29

Captain: *Kuso—, jūhatten kurai sugu tori-kaesu zo—!!*
"Sheeit, (we'll) make up/catch up 18 measly points in no time!!" (PL2)

Cats: *Nyā!!*
"Meow!!"

- as in the example above, *kuso* is used in a wider range of situations than its literal equivalent "shit/crap." While it's not exactly drawing room Japanese, it's not quite so vulgar as the four-letter Anglo-Saxonism. He elongates the *o* in *kuso* for emphasis.
- *ten* = "point(s)," but the combination 18 (*jūhachi*) + *ten* becomes *jūhatten*.
- *kurai* means "about/around/approximately," but here it's used to downplay the quantity mentioned before it.
- *sugu* = "right away/in no time"
- *tori-kaesu* ("take back/recover/regain") is from the verbs *toru* ("take") and *kaesu* ("return/replace/overturn").

30

Michael: *Yōshi*
"OK!"

Cats: *Tanomu zo—, Maikeru—!* / *Ike—!* (PL2-1)
"(We're) counting on you, Michael! / Go (get 'em)!!" (PL2)

- *tanomu* = "request/entrust/ask (a favor)," an informal equivalent of *o-negai shimasu*.
- *ike* (lengthened to *ikē* when the cats shout it out) is the abrupt command form of the verb *iku* ("go").

31

Michael: *Koi!!*
"Come on!!" (PL1)

- *koi* is the abrupt command form of the verb *kuru* ("come"), and again, the feeling is something like "Just let me have a crack at it!"

32

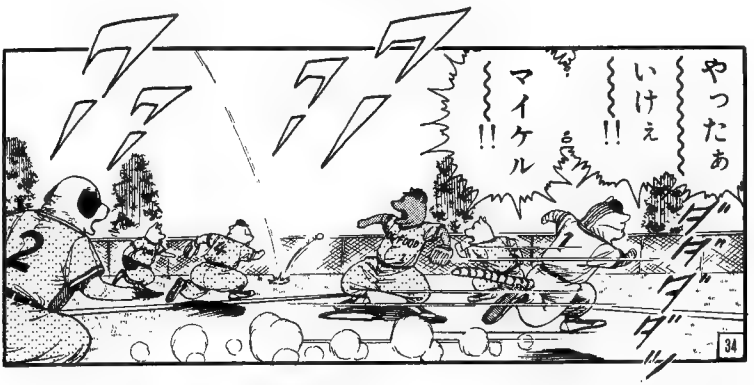
Pitcher: *Waon!!*
"Ruoff!!"

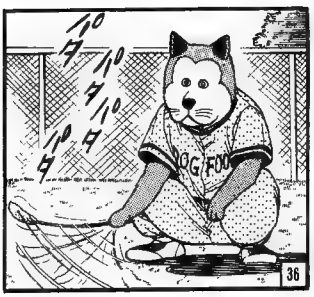
FX: *Ba!*
(effect of a sudden motion — throwing the ball)

33

Sound FX: *Kān!*
Clang (sound of the bat wacking the ball)

Michael: *Nya!*
"Meow!"





やはり猫には
野球は むいていない
ようである……

38

34

Cats: *Yattā—!* / *Ikē—!!*
"(You) did it! / Go!!" (PL2)
Maikeru—!!
"Michael!!"
Sound FX: *Da da da da!*
(sound of running feet)
Wā wā wā wā
(roaring of the crowd)

35

Dog Coach: *Yoshi!!*
"OK!!"
Yare!!
"Do it!!" (PL2)
Dog: *Hai!!*
"Yes, (coach)!!"

- *yare* is the abrupt command form of the verb *yaru* "do".

36

Sound FX: *Pata pata pata pata*
(a fluttering, flapping effect)

- he's waving what's called a *neko-jarashi*; *jarashi* is from the verb *jarasu* = "play (with a cat)."

37

Sound FX: *Ta ta ta ta ta*
(sound of dashing feet; lighter sound than *da da da . . .*)
Pashi!
Smack! (sound of the ball hitting the glove)
Umpire: *Autō—!*
"Out!"

38

Narration: *Yahari neko ni wa yakyū wa muite-inai yō de aru . . .*
So it seems that baseball is not really suitable for cats . . .

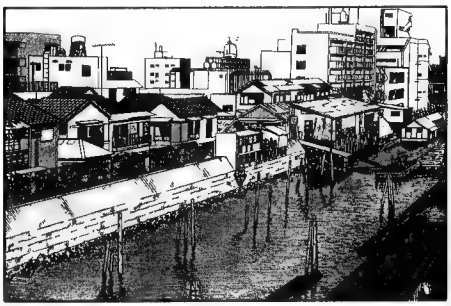
- *yahari* ("after all/really") indicates that one's initial expectations were confirmed.
- *yakyū* (literally "field ball") is the Japanese word for baseball.
- *muite-inai* is from the verb *muku* ("be suited to/fit for").
- *. . . yō* is used to describe the way things seem or appear.
- *de aru* has the same meaning, but is more literary than, *da* (PL2)/*desu* (PL3).

人間交差点

NINGEN KŌSATEN

矢島正雄・作　Yajima Masao • Story
弘兼憲史・画　Hirokane Kenshi • Art

Yajima Masao and Hirokane Kenshi found success in the manga world by largely ignoring the standard formulas. In *Ningen Kōsaten* there are few exotic locations, minimal sex and violence, and no continuing characters. What they have instead done over the past ten years in Shogakan's *Big Comic Original* (ビッグ・コミック・オリジナル), is to build a remarkable collection of stories about "intersections" or "crossroads" (交差点 *kōsaten*) in the lives of humans (人間 *ningen*). The subtitle, *Human Scramble* (ヒューマン・スクランブル) is a reference to the "scramble intersections" in which all vehicular traffic is stopped and pedestrians can cross in any direction—human crossroads tend to have a random quality.



Each story in the series is self-contained, and there is a photo-realistic quality to the drawings, which present modern Japan with all its beauty and warts—no effort has been made to glorify it or sentimentalize it. Still the, uniformity of Japan's post-war development allows every reader to recognize their own home town, so fans treasure these scenes, since middle-class neighborhoods are slowly being replaced by huge blocks of *danchi*; an aura of impending loss is ever-present in the series.

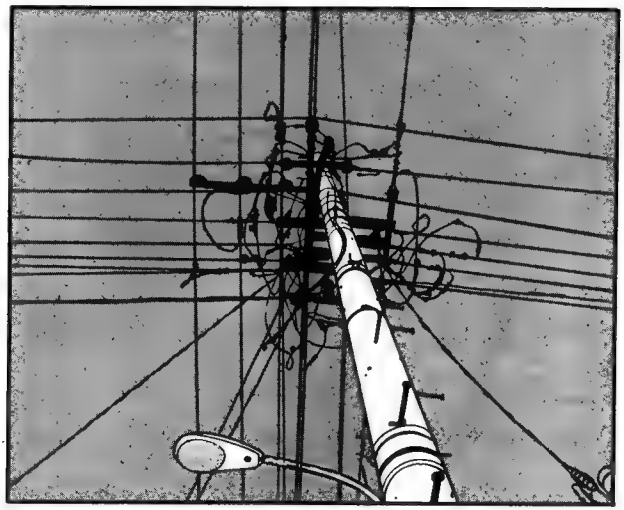
There are heroes and villains, but most of the characters are just people muddling through life the best they can. They are easy to recognize and to identify with, and the fact that they are drawn as real Japanese—no huge, round blue eyes, and no exaggerated features—adds to the feeling of every-

day reality. Their language is also realistic and direct.

In Japan, every person has two distinct sides: *tatemae* (建て前), the public face; and *honne* (本音), the true inner feelings which remain hidden to all but one's closest friends. *Ningen Kōsaten* deals with *honne*, giving an honest look at emotions in Japan few outsiders ever see.

The turning point in each story is often triggered by the memory and ramifications of a minor incident from the past. Although many of the stories are downbeat in tone, they also tend to be ultimately reassuring, that there can be small victories among the vicissitudes of life. If there is recognition of the fact that one does not always win, at least there is the hope of being able to cope.

– Ed Henderson



第六話 電柱

Dai Roku Wa
Story No. 6

Denchū
Telephone Pole

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私はいつも、二十五年前の
この光景を思い出す。
1
ヒタッ
2
3
ウィッ
4
ヒタッ
ゲッ
5

1

Narration: *Watashi wa itsumo, nijūgonen-mae no kono kōkei o omoidasu.*
I often remember this scene from twenty-five years ago. (PL2)

- *itsumo* = "always/habitually/frequently"
- *nijūgonen* = "twenty-five years"; *nijūgo* ("twenty-five") + *-nen*, the counter suffix for years.
- *-mae* literally means "before/in front of," and following a time word it indicates that amount of time "before/ago."
- *kōkei* = "scene/spectacle"
- *omoidasu* = "recall/remember"; *omoi* from the verb *omou* ("think (of)") + *dasu* ("take out/bring out").

2

Father: *Hiku!*
"Hic!" (as in "hiccup")

3

Over Door: *Haneda Hiroshi*

4

Father: *Ui!*
(one of the standard sounds associated with drunkenness, this is like a high-pitched "hic!" made with an intake of breath)

5

Father: *Gepu / Hiku!*
"Burp / Hic!"

Editor's Note

(continued from page 2)

inter-related (e.g. Basic Japanese column). When we were just getting started, we tried using Sweet JAM, a program that lets you produce Japanese text with ordinary English software (we were using it with PageMaker 3.02 at the time), running on the English operating system. While it is possible to combine English and Japanese text with Sweet JAM, and it is a practical and inexpensive solution for short documents such as letters, we experienced serious problems with letter spacing in longer documents. Editing is also very tricky with Sweet JAM—the cursor doesn't appear on the screen in it's true position. We eventually resorted to leaving spaces in the English document and producing all our Japanese text in a separate file, which was then cut and pasted into the English. In fact, in the earlier issues of MANGAJIN you'll notice that most of the Japanese is bit-mapped quality—printed on an ordinary PostScript-type laser printer from bit-mapped screen fonts. One common technique which we used was to print at a larger point size (12 point), then reduce on a copy machine to effectively get a higher resolution.

In issue No. 10 we began using Japanese PageMaker (version 3.0J). We got KanjiTalk 6.0.4 and the system switcher (to allow switching back and forth between the English and Japanese operating systems) in the familiar MacKanji package from Linguist's Software. The Q&A column (page 7) and Vocabulary Summary (page 74) in No. 10 were both produced with PageMaker 3.0J, as single documents incorporating both English and Japanese. We still couldn't afford to upgrade our laser printer to Japanese PostScript, however, so we sent our files to a service bureau to be printed (at 300 dpi). For the Japanese titles of the films in the feature story in No. 10, however, we used good old cut-and-paste.

Starting with this issue, we have made the big move to typeset-quality output. We're still producing the files using WordPerfect on the PC and PageMaker on the Mac, but we're sending them to service bureaus to be printed at 1,270 dpi. It's a little more trouble and expense, but we think our readers are worth it!

Vaughan P. Simmons

あ、俺、こんなに遣っちゃったかなあ。
7
6
ヒクッ
……
8
9
11
10
12

6

Envelope: *Kyūryō-bukuro*
Pay envelope

- *kyūryō* = "pay/salary"
- *fukuro* ("bag/pouch/envelope") changes phonetically to *bukuro* in combinations such as this one.

7

Father: *A, ore, konna ni tsukatchatta ka nā.*
"Ah, I, did I really spend so much?" (PL2)
Hiku!
"Hic!"

- *konna-ni* = "this much/so much as this"
- *tsukatchatta* is a contraction of *tsukatte shimatta*. *tsukatte* is the *-te* form of *tsukau* ("use/spend [money]"), and *shimatta*, the plain past form of the verb *shimau* which is added to verbs to imply that the result of the action is unintended, regrettable, or irreversible.
- the ending *ka nā* suggests that he is genuinely puzzled and trying to figure out "Where could it all have gone?!"

8

Father: *Hiku.*
"Hick."

9

Sound FX: *Basa! Basa gari-gari.*
(sounds/effects of messing up hair)

- *basa (basa)* can be a rustling sound, or the effect of (hair) being (thrown) in disarray.
- *gari-gari* is a scratching or grinding sound.

10

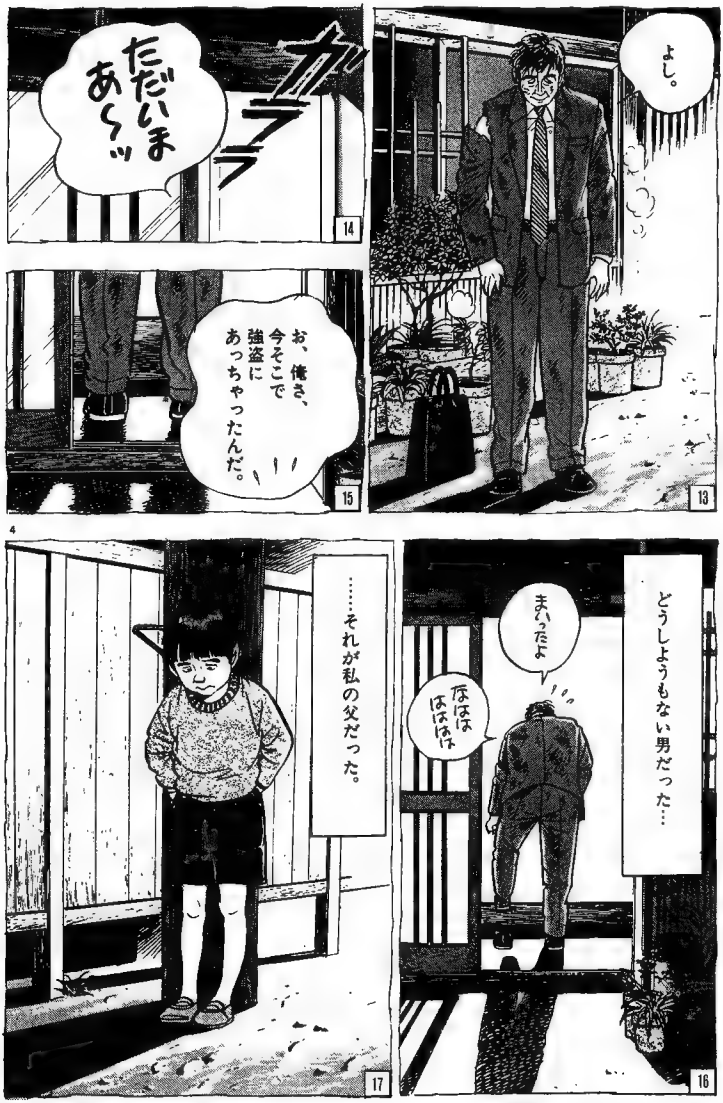
Sound FX: *Biri*
Rip (sound of tearing seam)

11

Sound FX: *Bata*
Flop

12

Sound FX: *Goro goro goro*
(effect of a heavy object rolling around — in this case, a person)


よし。
13
ガラ
ただいまぁ〜ッ
14
お、俺さ、今そこで強盗にあっちゃったんだ。
15
どうしようもない男だった…
まいったよ
ははは はははは
16
……それが私の父だった。
17

13

Father: *Yoshi.*
"Good." (PL2)

- *yoshi* is an interjection meaning "okay/alright/good."

14

Sound FX: *Garara*
(rattling sound of door sliding open) This type of door is probably on rollers, and the double *ra* of *garara* gives the feel of a slightly longer slide/rattle than just *gara*.)
Father: *Tadaima—!*
"I'm home!" (PL2)

- *tadaima*, lit. "right now/just now," is the standard greeting used when returning home; it's actually an abbreviation of *Tadaima kaerimashita* ("I have just now returned home"). The standard response to this greeting is *o-kaeri-nasai* ("[Please] return").

15

Father: *O, ore sa, ima soko de gōtō ni atchatta n da.*
"I-I, uh, just got mugged, right down the street." (PL2)

- *ore* is an informal/abrupt masculine form of "I/me."
- *sa* emphasizes and draws attention to the word it follows, and also serves as a kind of verbal pause.
- *ima* (literally "now") used with the past tense means "just now/just a few moments ago."
- *soko de*, lit. "at there," indicates a place relatively nearby.
- *gōtō* can refer to the person ("burglar/robber/mugger"), or the act ("burglary/robbery/mugging"). • *gōtō ni au* = literally "meet with a burglar/burglary → be robbed/mugged"
- *atchatta* is a contraction of *atte shimatta*, which is the *-te* form of *au* ("meet/encounter") plus *shimatta*, because the meeting was definitely undesirable/regrettable (cf. frame 7).
- *n da* on the end of his sentence indicates that an explanation is being offered. *n* is a contraction of *no*, and *da* is the PL2 form of *desu* ("is/are"), so *n(o) da/desu* can be thought of as "It's that (I was mugged)," but this form is used much more widely in Japanese than English speakers would use "It's that . . ."

16

Narration: *Dō shiyō mo nai otoko datta.*
He was a hopeless/pitiful man. (PL2)
Father: *Maitta yo. Na ha ha ha ha ha ha ha.*
"What a shock/I've had it. (Laughs.)" (PL2)

- *dō shiyō mo nai* is a complete thought ("there is nothing [one] can do"), which modifies *otoko* ("man"), so *dō shiyō mo nai otoko* is literally "a man for/about whom nothing can be done."
- *datta* is the PL2 equivalent of *deshita* ("was/were," from *desu* = "is/are").
- *maitta* ("I'm overcome/I'm defeated/I give up") is essentially an expression of one's helplessness, and in a case like this, shock; *yo* adds emphasis.

17

Narration: *Sore ga watashi no chichi datta.*
That was my father. (PL2)

- *ga* throws the emphasis on *sore* ("that") → "That (the man I have just described) was my father."
- *chichi* = "(one's own) father"

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そして、今こうやって…
18
父の背中を見るたびに
あの時のことを思い出すのだ
……
18

18

Narration: *Soshite, ima kō yatte chichi no senaka o miru tabi ni, ano toki no koto o omoidasu no da.* **And now, every time I look at my father's back like this, I remember about that time.** (PL2)

- *soshite* = "and/and then/and now"
- *ima* = "now" (cf. frame 15)
- *kō yatte* = "like this/in this way"; *yatte* is from the informal verb *yaru* ("do"), so *kō yatte* literally means "doing this way."
- *senaka* = "back" (of a person or animal) • *miru* = "look at/see"
- after a verb, *tabi ni* means "each time/occasion . . ."
- *ano toki* = "that time"
- *koto* = "thing(s)/event(s)," so *ano toki no koto* means "the things/events of that time → about that time."
- *omoidasu* = "recall/remember" (cf. frame 1)
- *no da* is the *no* of explanation with the informal (PL2) equivalent of *desu* ("is/are")—here best thought of as simply adding a slight emphasis. (cf. frame 15)

Manga Criticism

(continued from page 9)

The *dōjin-shi* (semi-amateur, semi-pro magazine) scene in Japan was as vigorous as ever in 1990, with tens of thousands of people attending the huge conventions where these privately published manga are sold. Several *dōjin-shin* artists have started to achieve fame in the majors. One group of six young women artists working under the name CLAMP, who rotate the jobs of conceptualizing, writing, and drawing, have attained best seller status with works such as *Seiden* (Rig Veda). They represent one of the most original concepts in manga production in years.

The two magazines of manga criticism, *Comic Box* and *Pafu*, are quite similar in format, but the former is the more quirky and interesting. In what I assume is a reflection of his personal political stance, the editor of *Comic Box* often includes articles on anti-nuclear issues. Sometimes the articles are obliquely connected to manga; sometimes there is absolutely no connection at all. In most magazines, this lack of editorial unity would be fatal. Perhaps because *Comic Box* is a manga magazine, it only seems to make it more interesting.

Frederik L. Schodt is the author of *Manga! Manga! The World of Japanese Comics* and *Inside the Robot Kingdom* (both by Kodansha International), and has translated such works as the *Gundam* series (Del Rey Books), and Tezuka Osamu's manga version of *Crime and Punishment* (Japan Times).

廉弘ちゃん、久しぶりねえ、立派になって。
19
うん？
廉弘？……どこに……
20
え？
21
あれ、今、あんたんとこへ寄ってたんじゃないの？
やだよ。
22
……

19

Neighbor: *Yasuhiro-chan, hisashi-buri nē, rippa ni natte.*
"It's been so long since I've seen Yasuhiro, and he's turned into such a fine young man!" (PL2)

- *-chan* is the diminutive equivalent of *-san* ("Mr./Ms.") used with first names or abbreviations of family names for children, close friends, and some animals. This neighbor has probably known Yasuhiro from the time he was a boy.
- *hisashi-buri* means "for the first time in a long time." Here the neighbor is speaking with Yasuhiro's father, but she could also use this phrase to greet Yasuhiro directly, "Long time no see." *nē* gives her sentence the feeling of "My goodness, it's been a long time!"
- *rippa* = "fine/magnificent" (We supplied the "young man" in the translation.)
- *ni natte* is the *-te* form of *ni naru* ("become/turn into"). Her speech is very colloquial, and strictly speaking, not a complete sentence, although the meaning is clear.

20

Father: *Un? Yasuhiro? Doko ni . . .*
"Huh?" "Yasuhiro? Where?" (PL2)

21

Neighbor: *E?*
"Huh?" (PL2)

22

Neighbor: *Are, ima, anta n toko e yotte tta n ja nai no?*
[Are, ima, anata no tokoro e yotte itta no de wa nai no?]
"Why, just now, didn't he stop by your place?" (PL2)

Neighbor: *Ya da yo.*
"What's going on?" [literally, "This is unpleasant."] (PL2)

- we've written the *n* separately above to show more clearly that it is a contraction of the particle *no*, but when spoken, it links the preceding and following words together almost as a single unit.
- *are* is spoken with the rising tone of a question, and expresses puzzlement/surprise at something unexpected.
- *an(a)ta* = "you" • *an(a)ta n(o)* = "your" • *toko(ro)* = "place"
- *yotte* is the *-te* form of *yoru* ("drop in/stop by").
- *itta*, the plain/abrupt past form of *iku* ("go") after the verb *yoru* shows that he has dropped by and already left.
- *n(o) ja nai no* is literally, "Isn't it that . . ." or "Isn't it the case that . . .," but does not have the feeling of wordiness these English phrases have.
- *(i)ya da* literally means "(I) don't like it/it's disagreeable" and *yo* adds emphasis. It's used, however, in an exaggerated way in such a wide range of situations (especially by females), that it's difficult to assign a single translation to it.

俺は世の中で
怖いものなんか
何もねえ!!
23
キャーッ
やめてえッ
ううさえ
ホッホッ
24
悪党なら、
まだ恨みようもある。
善良なら、
愛しようがある。
25

23

TV Villain: *Ore wa yo-no-naka de kowai mono nanka nani mo nē!!*
"There ain't nothing in the world that I'm afraid of!!" (PL2)

- *yo-no-naka* = "life/society/the world" • *yo-no-naka de* = "in the world"
- *kowai* = "fearful" • *kowai mono* = "fearful thing"
- *nanka* is used when the speaker wants to trivialize/belittle the thing he has just referred to. (cf. *What's Michael*, frame 3)
- *nani mo nē* is a rough masculine slang pronunciation of *nani mo nai* ("[I] have nothing/[There] is nothing"). The vowel combination *ai* can change to *ē* in rough masculine slang, especially that of gangsters/villains.
- A more literal translation of the whole sentence would be: "As for me, there is nothing in the world that is a fearful thing."

24

TV Voice: *Kyā! Yamete—!*
"(Scream) Stop it!" (PL2-Fem)
Villain: *Urusē.*
"Shut up." (PL1)
Sound FX: *Pori-pori*
Crunch, crunch (eating *senbei* rice cracker)

- *kyā* is the standard screaming sound for females.
- *yamete* = "(Please) stop it/don't do it," from the verb *yameru* ("stop/quit"). The elongated final vowel gives the effect of crying out or pleading.
- *urusē* is masculine slang for *urusai*, which literally means "noisy/bothersome," but is often used like the English expression "Shut up!" This is the same word that is the basis of the pun in the title *Urusei Yatsura* (See MANGAJIN No. 7, page 42), although it's "spelled" differently here.

25

Narration: *Akutō nara, mada urami-yō mo aru.*
If he were a villain, there would still be reason to hate him. (PL2)
Zenryō nara, ai shi-yō ga aru.
If he were a hero, there would be reason to love him. (PL2)

- *akutō* = "scoundrel/rascal/villain"
- *nara* = "if" • *mada* = "still/yet" • *aru* = "have/has"
- *urami-yō* is from the verb *uramu* ("bear a grudge against/be bitter towards" → "hate/despise") and the suffix *-yo* ("way/means of"), so *urami-yō mo* (or *ga*) *aru* is literally "to have a means of hating" → "could hate"
- *zenryō* = "goodness," but here is being used as an abbreviation of *zenryō na hito* ("a good man/man of goodness"), which contrasts with the villain of the previous sentence → "hero"
- *ai shi-yō* is from the verb *ai suru* ("love"), and is the same form as *urami-yō*.

そして自分に
似ていなければ
許しようもある。
26

主任、
用事って
何ですか？
まあ、座れよ、
ボクもこんなことを
君には言いたく
ないんだけど…
27

はあ……
29

最近の君を見てると
どうも不安でねえ、
いや、私だけじゃなく
課長からも
注意するように
言われているんだ。
28

26

Narration: *Soshite jibun ni nite-inakereba yurushi-yō mo aru.*
And if he didn't resemble me, I could forgive him.

- *soshite* = "and" • *jibun* essentially means "oneself," but it becomes "me/myself, he/himself, they/themselves, etc." depending on the context.
- *nite-inakereba* is from the verb *niru* ("be alike/resemble") → *nite-inai* ("does not resemble") → *nite-inakereba* ("if [he] does/did not resemble")
- *yurushi-yō* is from the verb *yurusu* ("forgive"). The suffix *-yō* ("way/means of") is the same as in *urami-yō* in the previous frame.

27

Subordinate: *Shunin, yōji tte nan desu ka?*
"Chief, what is it you wanted to see me about?" (PL3)

Yasuhiro: *Mā, suware yo. Boku mo konna koto o kimi ni wa iitakunai n da kedo . . .*
"Just sit down (a minute). I don't want to say something like this to you, but . . ." (PL2)

- *shunin* = "chief/manager/person in charge"; Yasuhiro would seem to be the head of a work group within a *ka* ("section").
- *yōji* = "some business/a matter to be discussed"
- *tte* is a colloquial equivalent of *to iu no wa*, literally "the thing you/someone mentioned."
- *nan(i)* = "what" • *nan desu ka?* = "what is it?"
- *mā*, is a soft/gentle-sounding interjection/"verbal lead-in" that adapts to fit its context, and gives a tone of moderation — "well now/all right." Yasuhiro's use of *mā* here is probably an attempt to make the young employee feel more at ease.
  (cf. MANGAJIN No.4, p.63)
- *suware* is the abrupt command form of *suwaru* ("sit down"). The use of this form by a male *shunin* to a young male employee is quite natural. • *yo* adds mild emphasis.
- *boku* is a word for "I/me" used by males, mostly by younger men and boys.
- *konna* = "this kind of" • *koto* = "thing" • *konna koto* = "this kind of thing"
- *kimi* = "you," used mostly by males to equals or subordinates.
- *iitaku-nai* is the plain negative form of *iitai* ("want to say") from the verb *iu* ("say").
- *da kedo* = "but."

28

Yasuhiro: *Saikin no kimi o mite-ru to dōmo fuan de nē.*
"When I watch you recently I'm quite worried, you see." (PL2)
Iya, watashi dake ja naku, kachō kara mo chūi suru yō ni iwarete-iru n da.
"I mean, it's not only me, I've been told by the section chief, too, that I should caution you." (PL2)

- *saikin* = "recent days/occasion," so *saikin no kimi* = literally "you in/of recent days."
- *mite-(i)ru* ("is/am/are looking") is from the verb *miru* ("look/watch/see").
- the particle *to* after a verb (*mite-ru*) gives a conditional "if/when" meaning.
- *dōmo* = "really/indeed/quite"
- *fuan* = "anxiousness/uneasiness." *Watashi wa fuan desu* = "I am anxious/worried."
- *de* is the *-te* form of *desu*, and *fuan de* is a continuing form ("I am worried, and . . ."). The rest of the sentence is understood, so he breaks it off with *nē* ("you see/you know").
- *iya* is a colloquial word for "no," used here as an interjection — "No/Well/I mean."
- *dake* = "only" • *ja naku* is a continuing form of *ja nai* ("is not").
- *kachō* = "section head" • *kachō kara* = "from/by the section head"
- *chūi suru* = "caution/warn"
- *iwarete-iru* is from *iwareru*, the passive form of *iu* ("say/tell").
- *yō ni iu* = "tell (someone) to (do something)," so *chūi suru yō ni iwarete-iru* means "I have been told to caution (you)." • *n da* indicates he is giving an explanation.

29

Subordinate: *Hā . . .*
"Yes sir (I see) . . ."

ガッ
ガッ
ガッ
30
ガチ
31
あの主任の言うこと、いちいちセコイの。
32
それも全部自分じゃなく、「誰がこう言っている」「誰があああ言っている」だぜ、気が小せえくせに立場上文句言ってるわけよ、臆病者が。
33
文句言ってるテメエのほうが、目をキョロキョロさせて情けないったらねえよ。
34
スッ
……
35

30

Sound FX: *Ka! ka! ka!*
(sound of heels striking tile floor)

31

Sound FX: *Gi!*
(**squeak** of hinge as door opens)

32

Voice: *Ano shunin no iu koto, ichi-ichi sekoi no.*
"What the chief says, it's all such nitpicking, isn't it." → **"The chief's a real nitpicker, isn't he."** (PL2)

Sound FX: *Jā!*
(sound of water running)

- *iu* = "say" • *iu koto* = "the things (someone) says"
- *ichi-ichi* = "all/every single one"
- *sekoi* is a slang expression meaning "tedious/nitpicky/carping about trifles."
- ending a sentence with *no* is typically feminine speech, but as shown in this example, young males use it too. Depending on the inflection, *no* can also be used as a variation of *na* (masculine) or *ne*, although this is really in the realm of dialect.

33

Subordinate: *Sore mo zenbu jibun ja naku, 'Dare ga kō itte-iru,' 'Dare ga ā itte-iru' da ze.*
"And it's all not himself, but 'So-and-so is saying this,' (and) 'So-and-so is saying that'."
→ **"And he won't take responsibility for any of it himself, but instead always claims 'So-and-so is saying this,' (and) 'So-and-so is saying that'."** (PL2)
Ki ga chiisē kuse ni, tachiba-jō monku itte-ru wake yo, okubyō-mono ga.
"Even though he's gutless, he criticizes because of his position — the coward." (PL2)

- *zenbu* = "all/everything" • *jibun* = "himself/oneself"
- *ja naku* is a continuing form of *ja nai* ("is not").
- *dare* ("who?") is used here to mean "so-and-so/such-and-such a person."
- *kō* = "this (way)" • *sō* = "that (way)"
- *itte-(i)ru* is from the verb *iu* ("say"). This form can indicate that the action is continuing/in progress ("is saying") or that the action is finished but its result continues ("has said").
- *ze* is a fairly rough emphatic particle used by men.
- *ki ga chiisē* is a masculine slang pronunciation of *ki ga chiisai* = "fainthearted/timid."
- *. . . kuse ni* means "even though/in spite of (some trait/characteristic, usually negative)."
- *tachiba* = "position/station," *tachiba-jō* = "because of/for reasons of (his) position."
- *monku* = "complaint/criticism" • *monku (o) iu* = "complain/criticize"
- *wake* = "circumstances/situation" so *. . . wake (da) yo* means "the situation is that . . ."
- *okubyō* = "cowardice/timidity" and *-mono* = "person," so *okubyō-mono* means "coward." This is inverted syntax — *okubyō-mono* is actually the subject of the sentence.

(continued on next page)

俺はさ、若い奴のためを思ってんだよな。
ゴポポポ…
36
後で困るのはあいつらなわけでさ、上だって俺と同じように評価してると思うんだ。
37
でも、その若い社員の言ってること、あたってるんじゃない。
38
だいたいあなたセコイし、暗すぎるわよ。
39
40

(continued from previous page)

34

Subordinate: *Monku itte-ru temē no hō ga, me o kyoro-kyoro sasete, nasakenai ttara nē yo.*
"The one who's doing the criticizing (is the one who) is shifting his eyes around, and is so pathetic." (PL2)

- *temē* is a masculine slang pronunciation of *temae*, a pronoun (usually derogatory) that can mean "I/you/he/they" depending on context. In this case the change is from *ae* to *ē* instead of *ai* to *ě*.
- *(something) no hō ga* is a phrase meaning "(something) more than (something else)." The implication is "He (the chief) more than me (the one who is being reprimanded)."
- *me* = "eyes" • *kyoro-kyoro* is the effect of unsteady/shifty/wandering eyes.
- *sasete* is the *-te* form of *saseru* ("make/cause something to happen"), so *kyoro-kyoro sasete* literally means "makes/causes his eyes to shift around" → "shifts his eyes around."
- *nasakenai* = "pathetic/disgraceful"
- *ttara* is a contraction of *to ittara*, a conditional "if/when" form of *to iu* ("say").
- *nē* is masculine slang for *nai* ("there is none/nothing"), so *nasakenai ttara nē yo* literally means "If you say 'pathetic,' there's nothing like it." → "There's nothing so pathetic/despicable."

35

FX: *Su!*
(effect of slipping out of the room unnoticed)

36

Yasuhiro: *Ore wa sa, wakai yatsu no tame o omotte-n da yo na.*
"I'm thinking of the young guys' best interests, you know." (PL2)

Sound FX: *Go po po po*
Glug glug glug glug (sound of beer pouring from bottle)

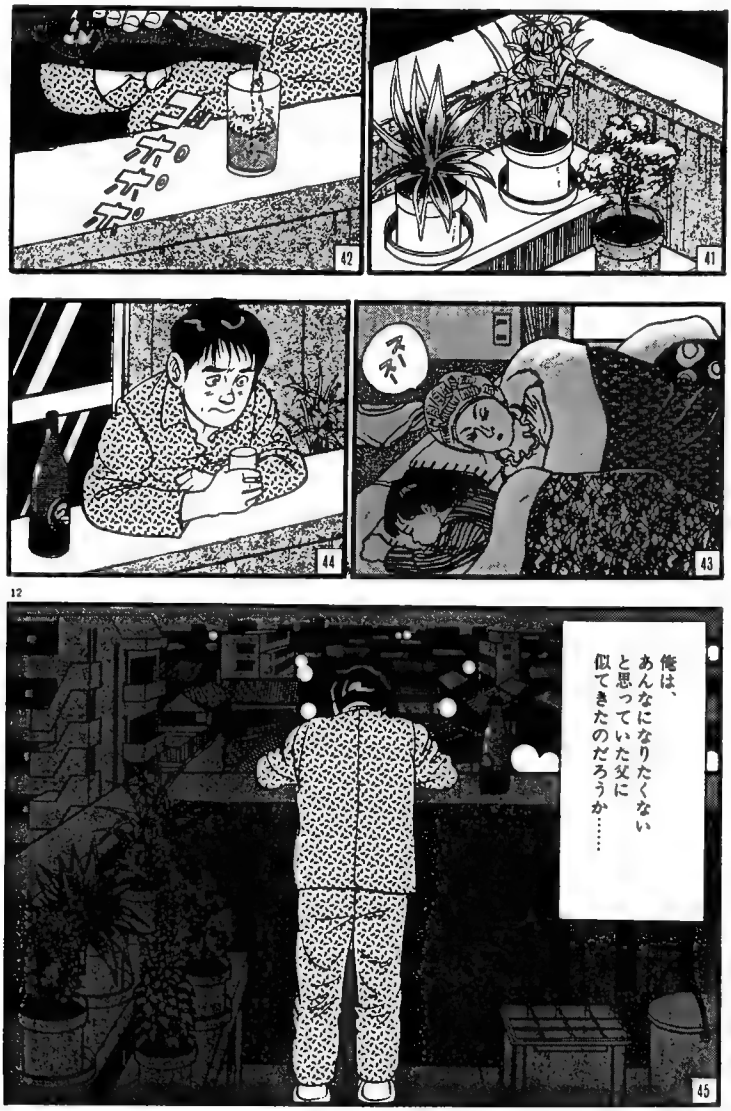
- *wakai* = "young" • *yatsu* = "guy/fellow" • *wakai yatsu* = "the young guy(s)"
- *tame* = "benefit/good"
- *omotte-n da* is a contraction of *omotte-iru no da — omotte-iru* from the verb *omou* ("think/consider") plus the explanatory *no da* ending (lit., "It's that . . .").

37

Yasuhiro: *Ato de komaru no wa aitsura na wake de sa,*
"The fact is that they're the ones who'll have problems later (if they don't listen),
ue datte ore to onaji yō ni hyōka shite-ru to omou n da.
and I think the higher-ups, too, evaluate them the same way I do." (PL2)

- *ato de* = "later/afterwards" • *komaru* = "be troubled/have problems."
- *no* turns what precedes it into a noun, so *ato de komaru no wa* = "the one(s) who will have trouble later"
- *aitsu* is a rather rough sounding word for "that fellow/guy" and the suffix *-ra* makes it plural → "those fellows/guys/ones"
- *na* after *aitsura* makes it (or the entire phrase preceding it) into an adjective which modifies *wake* ("circumstances/situation").
- *de*, after *wake*, is the continuing form of *desu*.
- *sa* serves as a kind of verbal pause between elements of his sentence.
- *ue* = "top/upper part" → "(my) superiors/the higher-ups"
- *datte* = "even/too/also," so *ue datte* is similar to *ue mo*.
- *onaji* = "same" • *onaji yō ni* = "in the same way"
- *hyōka* = "evaluation/assessment" • *hyōka shite-(i)ru* is from *hyōka suru* ("evaluate").

(continued on next page)


コポポポ
42
41
44
スースー
43
12
俺は、
あんなになりたくない
と思っていた父に
似てきたのだろうか……
45

(continued from previous page)

38

Wife: *Demo, sono wakai shain no itte-ru koto, atatte-ru n ja nai?*
"But, the things that young employee is saying, don't they hit the mark?" (PL2)
Sound FX: *Pasha pasha*
Splash splash (sound of water being splashed about in sink)

- *demo* = "but" • *shain* = "company employee(s)"
- *sono wakai shain ga itte-(i)ru* is a complete thought/sentence ("that young employee is saying/those young employees are saying") that modifies *koto* ("thing[s]"). In this kind of construction, the "subject marker" *ga* frequently changes to *no*.
- In more formal speech, *koto* would be followed by the particle *wa*.
- *atatte-(i)ru* is from the verb *ataru* ("hit the mark/be correct").
- *n ja nai* can be a question in informal speech even without *no* or *ka*. In such cases the question would be indicated by intonation.

39

Sound FX: *Jā*
(sound of water pouring from faucet)
Wife: *Daitai anata sekoi shi, kura-sugiru wa yo.*
"You *are* pretty much a nitpicker, and you're too gloomy." (PL2-Fem)

- *daitai* can mean "generally/for the most part," or "originally/to begin with"
- *wa* has again been omitted after *anata* ("you").
- *shi* = "and/and what's more"
- *kura-sugiru* is from the adjective *kurai* ("dark/dim/gloomy"). The suffix *-sugiru* means "too much/excessively."
- *wa* is feminine and *yo* is emphatic.

42

Sound FX: *Go po po po*
Glug glug glug glug

43

Sound FX: *Sū sū*
(sound of steady breathing when sound asleep)

44

Narration: *Ore wa anna ni naritakunai to omotte-ita chichi ni nite kita no darō ka . . .*
"Have I come to resemble the father about whom I thought 'I don't want to become like that'?" → **"Am I turning out like the father who I didn't want to be like?"** (PL2)

- *anna* = "that kind of/that sort" • *anna ni* = "that much/so much"
- *naritakunai* is from the verb *naru* ("become"). *naru* → *naritai* ("want to become") → *naritakunai* ("do not want to become").
- *omotte-ita* is from the verb *omou*, "think". The particle *to* indicates what he was thinking/thought.
- *anna ni nari-takunai to omotte-ita* is a complete thought/sentence ("I had thought so much [I] didn't want to become") modifying *chichi* ("[my] father").
- *nite kita* is the *-te* form of *niru* ("resemble/take after"), followed by the plain/abrupt past form of *kuru* ("come").
- *darō* is the PL2 version of *deshō* "it is probably/I suppose/perhaps."
- *no darō ka* = "Is it perhaps that . . ./could it be that . . ."

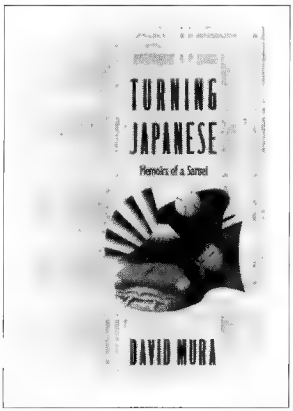
To be continued
in the next issue of
MANGAJIN

あいつ	*aitsu*	"that guy"/he
あきらめる	*akirameru*	give up on
悪党	*akutō*	villain
暑がり	*atsugari*	(person) sensitive to heat
弁当	*bentō*	box lunch
簿記	*boki*	bookkeeping
ボーナス	*bōnasu*	bonus
ボロ	*boro–*	shabby/run down (prefix)
ちゃんと	*chanto*	properly/correctly
大丈夫	*daijōbu*	safe/all right
デート	*dēto*	date
電柱	*denchū*	telephone pole
二人	*futari*	two people
普通	*futsū*	normal/ordinary
疑問	*gimon*	doubts/question
強盗	*gōtō*	robbery/robber
裸	*hadaka*	naked(ness)
花火	*hanabi*	fireworks
平和	*heiwa*	peace
変な	*hen-na*	strange/weird
部屋	*heya*	room
冷や麦	*hiyamugi*	iced noodles
いちいち	*ichi-ichi*	all/each one
いつも以上	*itsumo ijō*	more than usual
違和感	*iwakan*	sense of disharmony
いよいよ	*iyo-iyo*	finally/at last
邪魔	*jama*	disturbance/hindrance
自分で	*jibun de*	by oneself
会社	*kaisha*	company
回収	*kaishū*	recovery/collection
結婚	*kekkon*	marriage
謙遜	*kenson*	modesty
気が小さい	*ki ga chiisai*	fainthearted/timid
聞く	*kiku*	ask
決める	*kimeru*	decide/determine
恋人	*koibito*	sweetheart/lover
光景	*kōkei*	scene/sight
心	*kokoro*	heart
婚約	*kon'yaku*	engagement (for marriage)
こと	*koto*	thing/fact
怖い	*kowai*	fearful/frightening
クーラー	*kūrā*	air conditioner
暗い	*kurai*	dark/gloomy
窓	*mado*	window
負ける	*makeru*	lose/be defeated
跨る	*matagaru*	straddle
またまた	*mata mata*	once again
見栄をはる	*mie o haru*	be pretentious/put on airs
見損ねる	*misokoneru*	miss seeing
みっともない	*mittomonai*	unsightly/disgraceful
文句	*monku*	complaint
長居する	*naga-i suru*	stay (too) long
泣く	*naku*	cry/sob
何番目	*nanbanme*	what number/rank?
夏	*natsu*	summer
二塁	*nirui*	second base
奥さん	*okusan*	(someone else's) wife
思い出す	*omoidasu*	remember
終わる	*owaru*	be finished/end
立派(な)	*rippa(-na)*	fine/magnificent
涼をとる	*ryō o toru*	cool off (literary)
散歩	*sanpo*	a walk/stroll
せこい	*sekoi*	nitpicky
扇風機	*senpūki*	electric fan
洗濯機	*sentakuki*	washing machine
資格	*shikaku*	qualifications
始末する	*shimatsu suru*	clean up after
失礼	*shitsurei*	rudeness/impoliteness
商事	*shōji*	business/"Enterprises"
過ごす	*sugosu*	spend time/pass time
数日後	*sūjitsu-go*	several days later
好き	*suki*	like/be fond of
すっかり	*sukkari*	completely/entirely
住む	*sumu*	live/dwell
涼む	*suzumu*	cool down
立場	*tachiba*	position/standpoint
大会	*taikai*	conference/convention
大した	*taishita*	considerable/great/important
頼む	*tanomu*	ask (to do)/entrust
手入れ	*te-ire*	maintenance/care
友達	*tomodachi*	friend
倒産	*tōsan*	bankruptcy
次	*tsugi*	next
都合	*tsugō*	circumstances
つまらない	*tsumaranai*	boring/trivial
梅雨	*tsuyu*	rainy season
植木	*ueki*	garden shrubs/trees
売り掛け金	*urikake-kin*	accounts receivable
唄う	*utau*	sing
やぎ	*yagi*	goat
約束	*yakusoku*	appointment/promise
ゆでる	*yuderu*	boil
野球	*yakyū*	baseball
やめる	*yameru*	stop/quit
やっぱり	*yappari*	as expected/after all
余暇	*yoka*	free time/leisure
世の中	*yo-no-naka*	the world/life/society
夜	*yoru*	night/evening
ざわめく	*zawameku*	be stirred/be disturbed
全部	*zenbu*	all/the whole
善良	*zenryō*	goodness/good person
ぜったい	*zettai*	absolute/unconditional

TURNING JAPANESE
Memoirs of a Sansei

by David Mura
Atlantic Monthly Press, 1991, New York.
376 pages, $22.95 (hardcover)

Perhaps much of my annoyance with David Mura's *Turning Japanese* is just sour grapes. Here's a man who was awarded a generous grant to spend a year in Japan, under a program sponsored by the US/Japan Creative Artist Exchange. He went, he says, because he wanted time to write. What was expected of him? Nothing much, it seems, other than to experience Japan any way he liked. And he gets to bring his wife to boot. A sweet deal, to be sure, one for which most of us would cheerfully sacrifice our eyeteeth. The mere publication of *Turning Japanese*, Mura's chronicle of that year, should allow the sponsoring organization to feel that its money has been well spent, but the average reader is likely to react otherwise. It's not just the abundant accounts of indulgences such as daily barhopping, carousing, and dabbling in political demonstrations, but the endless self-indulgence and ultimate refusal to view Japan through any other filter than his own that makes one wonder if Mura is deliberately trying to incur the reader's dislike.



A *sansei* born, raised and educated in the upper middle class suburbs of Chicago, Mura is in most ways no different from any other foreigner visiting Japan for the first time. Yet in a curious form of racial essentialism, he asserts an affinity with Japan that he denies to other foreigners. Soon after his arrival, he is embarrassed by having to speak English in public, preferring, by grace of his appearance, to blend in with Japanese. "They (his Western companions) didn't have the sensitivity or flexibility to deal with Japanese culture; they came here with too many preconceptions. . . to speak English on the train created an island, separated me from the people around us" (p. 22). As he moves on to *Noh*, *Butoh*, and Japanese language lessons, his obsession with race reaches absurd proportions. Even the highly stylized and contorted *Noh* chanting "suits (his) voice in a way Western music doesn't" (p. 259). A common reaction for a newcomer, perhaps, but Mura never really gets over it. As he states toward the end of his stay, ". . . I find myself feeling a sense of rightness, a claim to a body of material that other white writers do not have. A compensation arrives, and if I feel other American writers come to European or English culture before me, I come to Japanese culture before them . . ." (p. 292). Move over Gary Snyder and Ezra Pound.

Given this assumption of special ethnic prerogative, one might reasonably expect accuracy in Mura's characterizations of Japan, but alas, half-truths and sweeping generalizations abound. I was startled to see that the Japanese "are not known for their oral tradition" (p. 176), that Sei Shōnagon wrote novels (p. 292), and that the point of the *Noh Dōjōji* is to capture a demon snake inside a bell (p. 161). Similarly, Mura manages to surpass even James Clavell in fracturing the Japanese language. The book is littered with gratuitous, mostly mistaken Japanese terms and phrases, such as *ohaiyo gozaimusu* for *ohayō gozaimasu*, *simbei* for *senbei*, *desserto* for *dezāto*, women's *dashi* legs (presumably *daikon ashi*?), *osoku ni natte* glossed as "it's late" (p. 163), and *sun de imasu ka* glossed as "where do you live" (p. 180). Reference to any Japanese-English dictionary would have cleared up most errors, but perhaps Mura felt entitled to exercise poetic license in this regard.

Although some interesting characters—including a female dance magazine publisher, an aging student radical, a Mexican lothario, even Kazuo Ohno of the *Butoh* theatre—populate Mura's world in Japan, their portraits are curiously flat and lifeless. Mura's wife Susie emerges as the most clearly delineated and by far the most sympathetic and perceptive of them all. While Mura rails against American racism, he is painfully insensitive to her own position as a white woman in Japan who has deferred her medical career in order to join her husband. (See, for example, pp. 246-250.) One can only commend her forbearance.

To be fair, Mura is, after all, a poet, and the best parts of the book are those that display his considerable poetic talents. As Japanese-American literature, a travel account, or even autobiography, this book may be of interest, but for accurate, engaging information and insight on Japan, one is advised to turn to its far superior brethren, such as John David Morley's *Pictures from the Water Trade*, Brad Leitner's *Equal Distance*, or Bruce Feiler's *Learning to Bow*. Even Isabella Bird's delightful *Unbeaten Tracks in Japan*, written long ago by a prim British spinster infected by wanderlust, provides a more illuminative mirror of a foreigner's encounter with Japan.

comments by: Ginny Skord, professor of Japanese language and literature, and straight-shooting reviewer

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33 year old American golf professional seeking correspondence with Japanese ladies who enjoy golf and can help to understand the language and people. #5 Grand Master, Monarch Beach, CA 92677

Business-oriented guy of 26 years looking for true, innocent, well-versed, noble-hearted girlfriend to share beautiful and successful life. Schawn Aziz-ul-Ghafoor, 3-6-15-202, Sugamo, Toshima-ku, Tokyo 270 Japan or call 03-3940-2524

Looking for pen pals interested in Japanese language and culture. Please write to: Samantha Chin, 1721 Hito Dr., Patterson, CA 95363

Flight attendant seeks correspondence with Japanese female in English. Hope to meet you someday and understand Japanese culture. Damrong Yap, Blk. 23, #04-765, Bedok South Ave. 1, Singapore 1646

Pen pals from foreign countries wanted. I'm a prof. cartoonist (comic-manga) so I'd like to correspond with someone who likes Japanese comics. Mika Kurihara, 1-1-15 Kotobukicho, Odawara-shi, Kangawa-ken, 250, Japan

Japanese 101 student seeks pen pals, interests include Japanese language/culture. Joe Park, 11233 NE Klickitat St., Portland, OR 97220

European manga fan seeks contacts. Write: Emmanuel Van Melkebeke, Parkplein 5, 9000 Gent, Belgium.

Male college student, 21, seeks female pen pal in Japan to discuss anime or music. Write in English to J. Faustino, 8677 Kinloch, Dearborn Hts., MI 48127

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Japanese, 37 years old, tour conductor seeks worldwide penpals by Japanese, English, Chinese. M.S. Uematsu, 2-606 Kumaiden Nakagawa-ku, Nagoya, Japan or, 15 02-04 Woking Road, Singapore 0513.

Interested in correspondence and friendship with a bilingual Japanese female. I'm a really nice guy, 26 years old, writer/director of movies. Send photo and letter to: Eric Sherman, 17 Marian Ave., Poughkeepsie, NY 12601

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Japanese American, 19, majoring in Japanese language seeks Japanese pen pals. Write in English/Japanese. Michael Nomura, 1254-302 Ala Kapuna St., Honolulu, HI 96819

European wishing to learn Japanese seeks native contacts or expatriates. Interested in manga and wishing to trade/obtain CDs. Please write: James McLean, 20 Valley View, Glasgow, G72 7LX, Scotland.

Californian male w/moderate Japanese skills addicted to reading/writing/learning seeks correspondence with anyone interested in anime-manga scene. Must have sense of humor. D.S. Hudson, 14191 Springdale #2, Westminster, CA 92683

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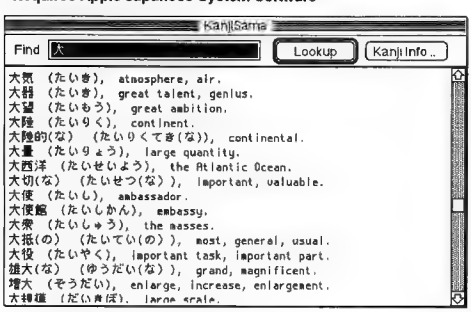

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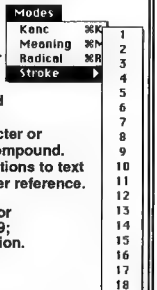

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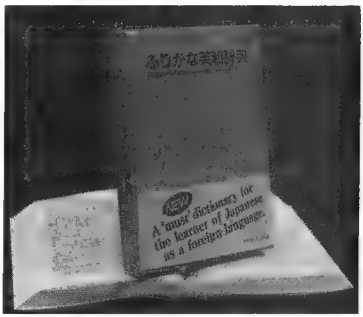

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